

# LONDON THE READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

[APRIL 1, 1873.]

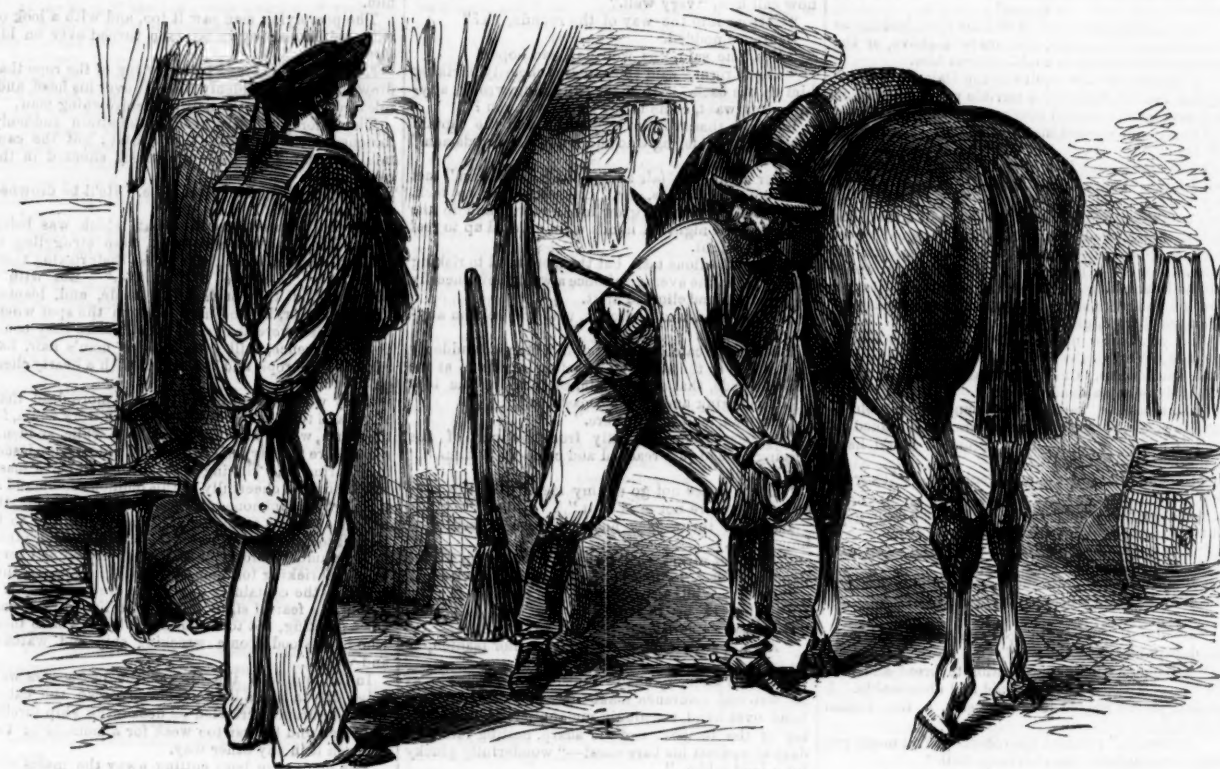
THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION]

[IS RESERVED.]

No. 516.—VOL. XX.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 22, 1873.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE NEW MAN AND THE NEW LIFE.]

## FICKLE FORTUNE.

By the Author of "Maurice Durant," etc.

### CHAPTER VI.

Well dressed, well mannered,  
Impossible to move,  
And free from all emotion.  
Shades of Milton, this is fashion!

THE individuals who are so fond of regretting the departed glory of ancient ornamentation should have paid a visit to the smoking and billiard rooms of the "Hermit Club" and mourned no more.

Within these rooms, adorned by all that was beautiful in painting and sculpture, and furnished with greater luxury than even an Oriental potentate could dream of, lounged, smoked and played a score or so of Hermits—Hermits, not of the long serge robe and hempen girdle, but Hermits attired in the latest fashions and blessed with position, money, and in most cases good looks.

In the billiard-room a dozen gentlemen were playing pool—pool at 5s. a life—playing it too in the most approved fashion, that is without the slightest appearance of interest, although an unguarded flash of the eyes when a man succeeded in potting his adversary's ball or a sharp frown when a life was lost showed that the languor and indifference were only skin deep and assumed.

Upon one of the luxurious sofas ranged round the room lay extended at full length a fine-looking man with the regular features and well-made figure that generally win the good opinion of the opposite sex and the title of "handsome."

His eyes were closed as if in sleep, though the perpetual click of the balls and the conversation of the players would prevent any one dozing but a very somnolent individual, and Reginald Dartmouth was anything but that; indeed, had you asked the opinion of any of his friends—and he had many—they would have laughed at the question and quickly informed you that Mr. Dartmouth was jolly "sharp," "cute," "knowing," and "wide awake."

Yet as he lay there with his eyes shut no one would

have given the gentleman in question much credit for either of the qualities, but it only needed a glance from the clear gray eyes to reveal the keen, restless nature of the brain within—restless yet outwardly calm, quiet and languid, for Captain Reginald Dartmouth secretly prided himself upon his *blasé* manner and immovable insouciance.

It was a saying at the club and the mess-room that "you never could surprise Dartmouth," and it nearly amounted to a truism.

Rush into the room where he was lying—he preferred that posture to sitting—with the most astounding, most terrible news, and he received it and you with calm indifference or, at the most, lazy interest. Yet Captain Reginald Dartmouth was no "swell" in the ordinary acceptance of the word.

He neither overdressed himself, talked childish nonsense, professed ignorance of the most ordinary everyday matters, as your idiots of that genus make a point of doing, nor lisped.

He dressed well, and with the care of a Brummel, and he wore an eyeglass—but to dress well he considered the duty of every English gentleman; and, for the eyeglass, it served sometimes to heighten or intensify the piercing look of haughty disdain which was so effectual in killing the snob or smothering an insolence.

Game after game went on, and still he lay on the soft velvet apparently unconscious and asleep, and he would probably have lain there until the clock had struck his usual retiring hour—but suddenly the door was burst open and a slight-built young fellow entered, and nodding to the players with a pleasant smile went up to the sofa upon which Reginald Dartmouth lay, and clapping him on the shoulder with a laugh, said:

"Hullo, Reg, asleep as usual."

"Ah, Charlie," said the captain, without rising or betraying the slightest surprise. "Is that you? Of course, I might have known it. No one else in the world would have the impudence to wake a fellow. It's my opinion you'd wake Methusalem if you came across his grave."

"It's my opinion," retorted Charlie Anderson, the gossip monger and general favourite of the club, "that you'd sleep as long as that respectable old party if some one didn't have the charity to wake you up sometimes. Why aren't you playing?"

"Tired of it. I won three pools."

"Ah, of course, you're such a great pot at pool. The fellows didn't like it, I suppose?"

"I didn't ask them," said the captain, indifferently.

"What's the time?"

"Twenty past one," replied Charlie. "I shall be getting home. Are you going any way?—I've got my cab at the door."

"As well your way as any other," replied Captain Dartmouth, carelessly.

"Come on, then," said Charlie Anderson. "The cob is a fidgety beast."

After waiting to light a cigar and watch Lieutenant Pawlton make a difficult hazard, Reginald Dartmouth put his arm within his friend's and the two passed through the handsomely decorated apartments into the inlaid hall.

At the door Sir Charlie Anderson's private cab was waiting and the two getting in were hurried away at steam-engine pace by the "fidgety" cob.

"Charlie, what do you want with me to-night?" said Captain Dartmouth when he had made himself comfortable in one corner.

"Why, how the deuce did you know I wanted you?" asked the young baronet, with admiring surprise.

The captain knocked the ash off his cigar and laughed lazily.

"My good fellow," he said, quietly, "a blind bat with its eyes shut could see that you had something to tell me. What is it?"

"Well, you are a clever fellow, the sharpest—"

"Yes, never mind the other flattering adjectives, my dear Charlie," interrupted the captain, with careless indifference. "Let us have the pith of the matter."

"Well, I've got some news for you," said the baronet, not a bit offended by the interruption. "You

know I've a sort of cousin down in the West, an old maid—scarcely that, though, for she isn't very old—you know what I mean, rather *passé*, though she's a nice little thing, quiet, and the rest of it, and a deal better than most of the run now-a-days."

"Yes," assented the captain, as a patient hint.

"Well, don't be impatient."

"I never was in my life," said the captain, softly.

"She writes to me pretty regularly, and—and was very kind and liberal with her money—she's got lots of it—when I was thinly feathered. This morning I got a letter from her that contains some news more interesting to you than to me."

The captain nodded but closed his eyes, looking as if nothing on the earth, the heavens above, or the waters under the earth could interest him.

"It seems that the squire at the Dale, near them, Squire Darrell, has had a terrible row with his son and cut him off—turned him out in fact."

The captain opened his eyes and knocked the ash off his cigar again.

"That isn't all. It seems the stupid fellow—the son I mean—instead of hanging about until the old boy worked round, cleared right off in the most unaccountable way and hasn't been heard of since. The dad, naturally riled at such beastly unreasonable conduct, adopts a niece of his and proclaims her his heiress. Well, I thought 'By Jove! Regy would like to hear of this,' because I remembered hearing you say you were some relation of the Darrells, and I fancied there might be a chance for you."

"So you throw up the dinner at Talbot House, and the society of the five charming Miss Powells to come and tell me. Charlie, you are—well, I won't be abusive—say a donkey."

"Oh, nonsense," retorted the young baronet, blushing, however, with genuine pleasure, for he liked as well as looked up to his companion. "You'd have done the same for me."

"Should I?" said Captain Reginald. "It's very doubtful."

"Well, never mind," said Charlie Anderson, good humouredly. "What are you going to do?"

"I am going to bed," replied the other, "if you will put me down at the Albany."

"Nonsense—I mean what are you going to do about the affair? He's a near relation, isn't he?"

"Uncle."

"By Jove! you ought to have a shot, old man. Go down and marry the girl."

"Thanks. I have an objection to bread-and-butter school-girls, they are insipid and abominable. I prefer, if the choice is a necessity, a Red Indian squaw."

"Nonsense," retorted the other. "You mean you don't care to leave the charming Bell."

The captain smiled, it was almost a sneer.

"All the ballet girls that ever danced their legs off would go little to keep me if—"

"If what?" asked the other.

"If I meant to play for my sweet uncle's land and cash."

"Well," said Charlie Anderson, "you know your own book best, old fellow. Good-night."

Leisurely pacing up the stone steps leading to his chambers, the captain turned into a handsome sitting-room where his valet awaited him.

"You can go to bed, Williams; I shall not want you," he said, and the man with a respectful bow made silently off.

Then Captain Reginald Dartmouth sank into one of the easy-chairs and stroking his silky moustache muttered:

"So my amiable uncle has turned that hot-headed cousin of mine out of doors and taken a school-girl to reign in his place. It's a fine property—too good for an idiot or a woman. I am in debt; I am poor; it does not look impossible—yet a raw-boned, giggling school-girl. Bah! it is too repulsive!" this last with a gesture of contempt; but, notwithstanding his distaste for the picture he had called up, he rang the bell and told his man to pack his portmanteau in time to catch the coach for Dale.

#### CHAPTER VII.

Oh, deeply beautiful, blue,  
Soft as a snake at sleep in summer's sun!  
How many a man has found in you  
The end of this world's weary run.

LEAVING Grace at Dale and the captain on his way to it, we must return to our outcast.

For the first few days the wonderfully novelty of his position drove something of his sad reflections to the wind that filled the vessel's sails.

We have said that Laurence Harman was strong, and it was only this strength that carried him successfully through the duties he had undertaken. He knew nothing of seamanship, and had never seen a vessel before; but he was quick of sight and could climb the tall masts and hoist the heavy sails as well as the best man on board after a few days' practice.

This strength and tact made him a favourite with the crew, who at first were rather inclined to resent his silence and moodiness. They could not but respect a man who never refused to give them a helping hand or relieve them of a wash, although he never addressed a genial word to them or even smiled.

The captain was a little puzzled to 'make him out,' as he said, and on the fourth day, meeting him as he was coiling a rope on deck, he stopped and asked him a few questions.

"How are you getting on, my man?"

"Thank you, sir," replied Laurence, as we must now call him, "very well."

"Getting into the way of the rounds, eh?"

Laurence nodded.

"Yes," he said, "as well as I can hope."

"That's right," said the captain, cheerily, striking him on the back. "If there's anything wrong, anything you want, come to me for it, will you?"

Laurence thanked him gratefully and the captain passed on, wondering who and what the "landman" was.

After eight days' fair sailing the "Mary Ann" met with contrary winds, that compelled her to tack. These contrary winds grew into a storm, and in the middle of the night all hands were ordered up to reef and make tight.

It was a perilous task, but the men, used to risking their lives at the average of once a week, flew cheerily to the masts and climbed aloft.

At their head was Laurence, who was seldom anywhere else.

The captain catching sight of him stopped suddenly on his way to the stern, and, casting a glance at the heavy clouds, that seemed almost touching the tops of the plunging and rocking masts, said:

"Harman, lend a hand here."

Laurence dropped lightly from the part of the rigging he had just reached and came up to him.

"Yes, sir."

"You'd better not go up, my man," said the captain, "as you're not used to it."

Laurence threw back his head with a gesture of impatience.

"I am not afraid, sir," he said, looking up at the flapping sails. "I'd rather go up, with your leave."

"Here! Well, go on," said the captain, gruffly, not liking to be thwarted in his kind intention. "Only have a care."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Laurence, sailor fashion, as he sprang towards the mast.

"That's a plucky chap," muttered the captain as he watched Laurence make his way up the mast hand over hand, seemingly undaunted by the howling of the tempest and the sharp, cutting rain that dashed against his bare chest—"wonderfully plucky for a land lubber."

Meanwhile Laurence had reached the top yards, and, with numbed fingers, was reefing the sails.

It was his first storm, and notwithstanding his natural courage and pluck he felt a queer sensation about his heart.

He dared not look down—the deck seemed miles below him, and he felt half blinded and senseless with the pitiless blast and the howling of the wind and waves. But the boatswain's call reminded him of his duty, and, hastily finishing his task, he prepared to descend.

His cold, senseless fingers could scarcely distinguish the ropes, but he reached the last yard safely, and was grasping the ladder to run and drop the rest when a sharp cry rose from the deck:

"Man overboard!"

It sent his heart into his mouth, and, springing to the side as quickly as the lurching and plunging of the vessel would let him, he tried to pierce the sailer's gloom.

By dint of hard straining he could distinguish a black speck upon the foam of the waves. It was the head of the drowning man.

He looked round for a rope, and, slipping the moose and round his waist, leapt upon the fairway.

A hand grasped him roughly by the arm and pulled him down.

It was the captain. Their voices could scarcely be heard, but Laurence caught the words "No use!" and with a shout of derision he, forgetful of his position, hurled the captain to the deck and sprang overboard in the direction of the drowning man.

The captain, who could not afford to lose two of his men, with heavy weather looming ahead, and having besides a strong admiration for the bravery of the landman, sprang to the wheel and brought the vessel round a little, while half a dozen sailors who had witnessed the accident and Laurence's reckless attempt at rescue hurried to the stern and shouted with all their might and main to Laurence to turn back.

Suddenly one of the men caught sight of the rope, and, just in time, seized and fastened it to a bulkhead.

Meanwhile, utterly disregarding the frantic shouts

of warning, Laurence fought his way to the black speck.

Fortunately the man was almost as good a swimmer as himself, and the waves that buffeted Laurence took him nearer the vessel.

As they approached each other Laurence saw that the poor fellow's face was white, almost blue, and that in another moment he would be beaten. Though nearly exhausted he exerted himself for one last effort, and struck out strongly.

At that moment he felt a sudden strain upon the rope, and knew that the men on board were pulling him.

The poor dying man saw it too, and with a look of wild, helpless agony in his face turned over on his back.

Laurence, maddened by every tug of the rope that drew him away, suddenly lifted it over his head, and, released, caught at the hair of the drowning man.

The sailors on board, feeling the strain suddenly loosened, looked at each other aghast; but the captain, who dared not leave the wheel, shouted in the ear of one:

"The idiot has let go the rope. He'll be drowned as safe as a gun."

The man sprang to the boat which was being lowered, and told the men who were struggling to get her launched that it was no use their risking their lives after "a couple of dead men." But with a scornful shout they pushed him aside, and, leaping into the cutter, battled hard to reach the spot where the two men were struggling; but before they could do so Laurence, still grasping the man's hair, had regained the rope, and the sailors with a hearty cheer pulled them in.

They were carried to their berths more dead than alive, and then the crew were hard at work again, for the storm, which had lulled for a little while, suddenly raged more fiercely than before, and orders were issued for clearing the rigging and cutting down a mast. Responding as cheerfully to this ominous command as if they were summoned to receive an extra ration, the sailors swarmed to the task. Then a few had to be told off to clear the decks, for the miserable emigrants, to the number of forty or fifty, were crowding everywhere, shrieking for help, and clinging, when they could, to the captain or any of the crew.

It was a fearful sight, not to be realised by our poor word painting, not to be imagined by any save those who have stood upon a wrecking ship and watched and waited.

In the middle of the din, as the passengers were being driven like a herd of sheep down the cabinways, Laurence crawled on deck—the ship lurched too much and he was too weak for a moment or two to reach it in any other way.

The men were busy cutting away the masts with their axes. He caught up one, but found his arm unable to swing it, and set himself to the task of keeping the deck clear.

After a deal of persuading and threatening the emigrants were got into the hold and below-deck, and Laurence stopped for a moment to wipe the perspiration from his brow. At that moment the captain called to him to come and take the wheel and so liberate him.

As he grasped it the captain looked at him with a curious look.

"You don't seem much put out with the gale, my man," he said.

Laurence shook his head moodily.

"No," he said, "it is all over to me."

The captain shook his head gravely and made his way forward. Presently he came back.

"They have got the mast clear," he said. "Ten minutes will decide it," and he looked anxiously up at the black sky.

"Where are we?" asked Laurence, carelessly.

"Heaven knows!" replied the captain. "I am keeping due west, but why I could scarcely tell you."

"We have lost our reckoning then, sir?" said Laurence.

"Yes; Heaven help us!" nodded the captain, gloomily.

"Good-bye to the Dale for ever then?" muttered the young fellow, and he turned away.

But the storm gave way as suddenly as it had commenced. The heavens lightened, the clouds dispersed as if by magic, and a soft breeze taking the place of the boisterous gale fanned them gently into a harbour towards which they had been driving the whole night through.

For the rest of the voyage Laurence Harman was the hero of the "Mary Ann," and when he landed at Cape Town the sailors parted with him amidst a hearty round of cheers.

His simple affection moved the solitary outcast, and he turned from the quay with eyes too blinded by the sudden tears to look about him for a moment or so.

When he did look round he was startled. The



scene that met his eyes was so unlike any he had ever witnessed that he could only stand still and gaze in wonderment.

From this attitude he was aroused by a chorus of Hottentots, who threatened round him and offered to carry his luggage. This offer, having no luggage of any kind, he of course refused, and walked up to the middle of the town, which seemed to be composed of about twenty regular streets of white houses with a square place here and there for markets and general business, and one or two large houses round the fort and at the ends of the streets.

At the back of the town rose a range of majestic hills, some of them flat-topped like a table, all well wooded and beautiful.

Laurence, feeling very lonely and strange, walked through one of the streets, and seeing a man standing in a square place with about a dozen splendid horses round him, asked him if he knew Stewart's Corner.

The man, a thick, badly-fellow, dressed in a loose linen shirt, open at the chest, and a pair of rough tanned skin breeches, in the girdle of which stuck a revolver and a large, formidable-looking bowie knife, paused in his examination of a horse's foot and shook his head.

"What is't, a station?" he asked.

"Yes," said Laurence, seating himself on a block of wood and looking at the horses with a critical eye.

"Well, I guess I don't remember," said the cattle-minder, "but most like one of the niggers will," and picking up a whip which lay on the ground he clacked it.

In an instant as if by magic half a dozen black fellows started from out-of-the-way holes and crevices, beneath the horses, from under rugs and bales of cotton, and crowded round.

"Where be Stewart's Corner, Sam?" asked the man, stooping down to the horse's hoofs again.

The Hottentot opened his mouth very wide and then took to staring at Laurence, seemingly forgetting the question as soon as it was asked.

Not hearing him answer the horseman looked up and caught him a sharp cut across the bare shoulders. "Hi! darn your sleepy head! wake up, will you? Where be Stewart's Corner, you woolly-headed lunatic?"

"Hi! hi!" screamed the Hottentot. "Stewart's Corner am by the Hartbeestie River. 'Un gon'na want ungo?"

"Yes," said Laurence, interested and amused at the strange race and strange manners. "Yes, I do."

"Well, un go to Massa Stewart's square in the corner there, and wait till Massa Stewart's horses come up from the country."

Laurence did not understand, and looked as if he did not.

"That woolly-headed idiot means that you will have to wait at that rail there," explained the man, pointing to another enclosed space, "until Stewart's man arrives. He's coming up with horses to pick up cattle and men, I suppose, to-day. Ah, Sam?"

"Yup, yup," said the Hottentot, showing his teeth. "Thank you," said Laurence. "What's the matter with the horse? Something in the frog?"

"Spect so," said the horseman. "I can't see as well as I could one time. This blamed climate is enough to roast your eyes completely out sometimes."

"Let me look," said Laurence, and he knelt down beside him. "Ah, here is the mischief," he exclaimed, pulling out a small thorn.

"Thank you, thank ye," said the man, with rough gratitude, and made more friendly by Laurence's kindness, he pulled out a flask from his belt and held it out with the curt explanation:

"Brandy!"

Laurence just wet his lips, he knew better than to refuse, and giving him good-day walked over to the other enclosure, the group of slaves following at his heels until a vigorous smack of the whip brought them back to their old places like a pack of Berkshire pigs.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

Then farewell, England,  
Fog-registered Isle!  
In fairer, softer climes  
We'll rest ourselves awhile.

LAURENCE seated himself upon one of the thick blocks of wood, prepared to wait the arrival of Mr. Stewart's man.

He had not to wait long. Before he was half tired of watching the odd groups of people that passed him—a stout, well-to-do colonel, rough, skin-clad, revolver-wearing cattle runners, and gangs of Hottentots and slaves—a cloud of dust rising in the distance attracted his attention, and, watching it until it resolved itself into a long string of splendid and valuable horses, he was agreeably surprised to find the horseman at their head pull up his fiery steed at the foot of the enclosure.

Instantly half a dozen Hottentot slaves leaped from the horses at the rear, and joined by their lounging brethren clustered round their chief, waiting for orders.

Twisting the long thong of his whip round the handle, this individual gave some commands to one of the negroes, and then turned to Laurence with a look of inquiry.

"I was directed to wait here for Mr. Stewart's man," he said, in answer to the glance.

"I'm one o' Stewart's runners," replied the man, jerking up his trousers and glancing at the well-built form and broad, bronzed chest of the speaker with critical eyes. "What might you want?"

"I want to see Mr. Stewart," said Laurence.

"Ah," said the runner. "Well, the station is six days' trot from here. I'm up here to get the mails and pick up any man. I go back to-morrow, though, and you can come along an' so be you like."

Laurence accepted the offer with thanks.

"What time shall I be here?" he asked.

"We start at sunrise," said the runner, then added, roughly: "P'raps you've just come off board?"

"I have," said Laurence.

"Ah, you'd better come along o' me," rejoined the runner. "You're a stranger in these parts, and mayn't be up to the ways. If you like to share with me to-night, I can take you to a comfortable sup and a shakedown in some hay."

This offer Laurence as gratefully accepted, and, after seeing the horses led away to a lot of hay thrown down some little distance off, the runner, accompanied by Laurence, went on to the quay.

Having found no men to suit his taste, he repaired thence to a small public-house, half cottage, half hut, and, as he had promised, shared his supper and hay with Laurence.

At sunrise Laurence was awakened by the barking of countless dogs, the clacking of the long whips, and the chattering of the Hottentots.

Hastily washing himself at a small stream, he hurried to the enclosure and found his friend the runner already marshalling his cortege and whipping down the exuberant spirits of his black followers.

It was a splendid sight, that long line of handsome animals prancing and pawing the ground, throwing up their shining heads, and shaking their flowing manes.

Laurence's heart, for the first time for a long while, stirred within him, and he longed to leap on the back of one of them and gallop away—away—anywhere from the bitter past and his sad thoughts. "Hallo," said the runner. "Wondered where you'd got to. We're ready, you see. Here, 'im, bring the black round," and he pointed to a tall, powerful-looking horse at that moment on its hind legs.

"Can you ride?"

"Yes," said Laurence.

"Well, here's a critter as can carry you," said the runner, throwing a thick rag across its back.

Laurence sprang across it, and grasped the bridle with a flash of delight.

It did not last a second, but the runner noticed it and nodded approval.

"All right," he muttered; "you'll do."

Then there ensued a terrific din, shouting, yelling, barking, whip-cracking, and at the last moment the six Hottentots leaped on their horses and the cavalcade started.

Unencumbered by heavy saddles, of splendid breed, and used to running swiftly for long and weary distances, the horses seemed to fly.

Cape Town was quickly left behind, an open plateau reached, and then a dense wood with but a small path cut clear for the Indian file which the horses instantly and without any instructions formed.

Here the most glowing vegetation, the most beautiful and vivid perfumes, and, above all, the most delicious bird-melody he had ever heard, greeted Laurence.

He was delighted. It seemed fairyland. His companion, riding on in front, took the scenery and its delights as a matter of course, and Laurence caught himself wondering at his indifference. He little thought how soon he likewise would view the loveliest of Nature's handiwork with indifferent carelessness.

At night they left the forest, and pulled up at the foot of some rocks.

Here the slaves lit a fire, and set to work cooking some deer steaks, the runner standing by with his long whip under his arm, and viewing the operations with the air of a prince.

Laurence leant against his horse, and gazed round him and upon the group beneath his eyes with the most acute interest.

From his reverie he was awakened by the runner, who clapped him on the back and invited him to sup.

Nothing loth, Laurence threw himself down on the soft, springy grass, and ate his share of the juicy

steak with relish, then, declining the draught of brandy which the friendly runner offered him, he rose and leant a hand at securing the horses for the night, which was done by tying the bridles to small pickets driven firmly into the ground.

Then, as the moon rose above the trees, he curled himself up in his rag beside the fire, and listened to the snoring of his companions.

He could not sleep himself, because his brain was too busy. At this period he seemed to know more than a double quantity of brain and a double pair of eyes to see and understand all the wondrous sights of the new and strange land.

Looking round at the dusky outlines of horses and Hottentots, at the grand range of hills, listening to the swift whiz of the deer as they fled through the forest, and the sharp cry of the wolves, he could scarcely believe he was awake, scarcely refrain from assuring himself that it was all a dream, and so, puzzled and confused, but with a sad, weary heart still, he fell asleep.

On the morrow, at sunrise, after a breakfast that was but a repetition of the last night's supper, they were on the gallop again.

At first the country was more open, but soon it became rockier, and at last, towards evening, the dark outline of another forest appeared in view.

"That there is the Black Forest," said the runner, pointing to it. "We shall have to skirt a little for deer—these rascals have run short, they tell me. If you've a mind to try your luck with a hundred-yarder, p'raps you'll come along."

Laurence accepted eagerly, but said, with regret, that he had no gun.

"Here, 'im, bring the hundred-yarder," said the runner, and a little Hottentot boy galloped up with a gun which the runner handed to Laurence. "We allers bring a good supply," he said, passing him some ammunition, "for we don't never know as we shan't want it."

Laurence thanked him, and, following his directions, paired off with two of the elder natives towards the east, while the runner bore for the west.

As they entered the forest the natives tied the three horses to a tree, and, carefully noting the place, crept along, with Laurence at their heels, examining the ground at every foot.

Presently the foremost one held up his hand, and then fell flat upon the ground.

Scarcely had Laurence time to follow his example—the other native having dropped almost at the same moment—when a peculiar cracking of the branches and underbrush was heard, and suddenly, like a vision of the fancy, a herd of antelopes came flitting through the deep glade.

With the quickness of lightning he raised his gun and marked the foremost one. There was a sharp crash, echoed all round the vast wood, and the graceful beast gave a leap into the air.

Laurence was about to spring forward, but the natives held him back, whispering:

"Sh! sh! massa. Him not dead enough. Him rip massa up, him rip massa up. Massa go to him d'rootly."

Laurence waited a few minutes, that seemed ages, and then, with his knife ready in his hand, ran to the fallen game. He was dead, but to make certainty more doubly sure, he plunged the deep-bladed knife in the noble neck, and then assisted the natives to carry the prize to the open.

There they found the runner with a fine buck which he had shot, and, slinging the two across two of the spare horses, they went on their way.

The runner seemed rather surprised at Laurence's good fortune, and evidently thought more highly of him, for he grew somewhat more talkative and inquisitive.

When they alighted in a clear space, after having ridden thirty miles, and the natives set about preparing dinner, the runner stooped to examine the antelope which Laurence had shot, and said, outly:

"That's a good shot."

"I am glad you think so," said Laurence.

"And you can ride, too," said the runner. "What might be your name?"

"Laurence Harman," was the reply.

"Oh," said the runner, "one of 'em 'ill do for our fellows. L-o-r-e-n-c-e, how do you spell it?"

Laurence spelt it for him.

"Ah," said the runner, "it's a gimeraack name. But you can't help that, can yer? A chap doesn't give himself his own name, nor's the pity sometimes. My name's Jack, Long Jack I'm called; that's short, if it ain't sweet."

Laurence nodded.

"It's both," he said, "and a better one than mine, which you can alter for any other you like."

"Thankee," said the man. "Maybe I shall. Now then, you rascals," addressing the natives, and eliciting a chorus of "Yes, massa," "where's the grub?"

The steaks were soon done, and proved very acceptable. Laurence enjoyed his portion none the less for having earned it.

After dinner the runner Jack offered his pipe to Laurence, but he refused to deprive him of it, and Jack, taking the refusal in good part, smoked it himself, eyeing Laurence with an increased interest, for a man who could refuse a pipe was a curious piece of humanity in his eyes worth looking at.

On, as before, they went until nightfall, when, instead of one camp fire, half-a-dozen were formed in a circle round horses and men.

Laurence did not need long to ponder over the why and wherefore of this, for, as the darkness grew, the stillness of the night was broken by the roar of the tiger and the laughing of the hyena. As he grasped his gun, with a thrill of excitement, he thought, "I am, at last, on real hunting-ground!"

Towards the close of the sixth day the cavalcade approached its destination.

The towering hills and thick forests gave place to miles of springy, emerald pasture, upon whose soft, velvety bosom grew a wealth of many-coloured flowers, here and there bent down and broken by the tread of many herds of cattle and the ruts of the heavy waggons.

Laurence noticed all these appearances attentively. "We are near home now," said the runner, looking to see if his company were in proper order. "Away, my boys!" and, with a deep-sounding crack of his long whip, he urged the horses on at flying pace. Soon the tracks on the grass grew thicker and more frequent, and presently the station came in sight.

Laurence uttered an exclamation of surprise and delight, for before him lay an earthly Paradise—green grass, bright flowers, studded by cattle, horses, and sheep in thousands, backed by a distant range of tree-covered hills, and, like a small scrap of canvas cut from an artist's picture, a picturesque farmhouse, built of wood and rough white stone, rearing its head in the middle of the plain, and sheltered by a group of noble trees.

At its side ran a silver, bubbling brook; around it rose majestic hay-ricks, and everywhere there met the view the wealth of the squatter—horses and cattle.

At the sound of the horses' hoofs, pattering over the rough, beaten road, a small crowd of Hottentots ran, shouting, to meet them, followed, more leisurely, by half-a-dozen men, runners, built and dressed on the model of Jack.

Laurence looked round with deep and heart-swelling emotion.

"This is Paradise!" he exclaimed.

"It be Stewart's Corner," grinned Jack, and, with a final crack of his whip, he leapt to the ground before the door of the homestead, the natives rushing at each other with questions and welcomes, and hastily unfastening the horses and leading them off.

Laurence, still gazing round him, dismounted. "Where's the guv'nor?" asked Jack of one of the men.

"Here I am!" exclaimed a voice which Laurence recognized at once, and the owner of the station stepped out of the house.

He started with astonishment as he saw Laurence.

"By the living Jingo, young sir," he exclaimed, "I did not expect to see you so soon!"

"I trust I am none the less welcome on that account," said Laurence, with his grave smile.

"Not a bit, not a bit. More, more!" retorted the settler, shaking hands. "Here, come aside, will you?" he added, as the group of men were staring with curious eyes and listening with all their ears.

Laurence followed him into a large, plain room, with great beams across the high ceiling, and furnished with rough, strong deal tables and chairs.

There was an exquisite perfume pervading the place, which was wafted in through the open windows from the natural flowers that shone and glittered in such profusion without.

The settler pointed to a chair, and, throwing his hat upon the table, reached a large black bottle from a cupboard.

"First of all, let me do the hospitable," he said.

"There, man, drink to the new land and the new life!"

And, setting the example, he lifted one of the horn cups, which he had filled, to his lips with a cheery smile.

Laurence, with a grave smile, wet his lips and put his cup down.

"Now let us hear all about it," said Mr. Stewart.

"Here, have a cigar," and he handed one.

Laurence lit it, and, feeling more at ease at the first puff, said:

"Mr. Stewart, I did not think when I listened to your description of your station that I should so soon visit it."

And the poor fellow sighed.

"Well," said the settler, with a meaning smile, "I did."

"You did," repeated Laurence, with his swift frown. "Why?"

"Well, no matter," replied the settler. "Here you are, you see, Mr. Darrell."

Laurence Harman lifted his head quickly, with a sudden flush.

"Not that name, please," he said. "If I remain here, and I came here with the intention of asking you to give me employment, you must promise me to forget, as entirely as I do, that there is such a place as the Dale, or that such a person as Hugh Darrell—he faltered at the name, but went on, almost sternly, "ever existed."

Mr. Stewart held out his hand.

"That's a bargain," he said, "Mr. —"

"Laurence Harman, without the 'Mr.,' please," said Laurence, firmly. "I have left the Dale and the old name for good, and, with your permission, will not trade upon the past. I am here, and elsewhere, plain Laurence Harman, cattle runner, herdsman, what you will."

And he shook his head, with a short and somewhat bitter laugh.

"Very well, Laurence," said the settler, who could guess at what occurred between the fiery squire and his son, and was inwardly blessing the bad temper of the one and the wilfulness of the other for sending him such a fine, stalwart servant.

"Very well, it's a bargain, as I said before. We'll forget the past, and go in for the future, and that's not such a bad exchange as you might think, Laurence."

"I care not, bad or good," replied Laurence, indifferently. "Give me enough to eat, and plenty of hard work to keep memory at bay, and I shall not complain. Nay, I will even be grateful."

"Ah, you're down in the mouth," said the settler, patting him on the back, "and looking through green spectacles. Wait a week or two, and we shall have you as light-hearted as the rest."

Laurence smiled quietly.

"I'll not give you cause to call me kill-joy," he said, "trust me."

"I will for more than that," said the settler. "And now come upstairs with me."

Laurence followed up the rough, huge stairs, and into a small room planked round with deal and filled with guns, rifles, pistols, revolvers, saddles, other kinds of harness, ammunition—in fact, an odd medley of weapons of the chase and their accompaniments.

"This I call my armoury," said the settler, with a laugh of pride. "Look round and take your pick of the long 'uns."

"Thanks," said Laurence, "but I have already a gun, which Jack the runner lent, or I might say, gave me."

"Oh, that be hanged for an old thing," retorted Mr. Stewart. "Look here; here's some I brought over from England. By the way, we had a deuce of a rough passage; how did you fare?"

"We had some stormy weather," replied Laurence, simply, but he said nothing of his heroic rescue of the man overboard.

"Ah," said Mr. Stewart. "Well, look here, what do you think of this?" and he took down a good-looking rifle.

"If that is for me I have only one fault to find," said Laurence, gravely; "and that is that it is too good and expensive. I have only a few shillings in the world."

"Bah, man!" exclaimed Mr. Stewart. "We find our workmen their tools, not charge 'em for 'em. If that will suit you, take him, and this," handing him a revolver.

"Here's a knife, too, a bowie, which you'll find useful enough before long, I daresay. As for the powder and shot, etc., here it is always ready at your hand."

Laurence thanked him.

"And now for the mounts," continued Mr. Stewart, locking the door behind them and running downstairs. "Have you seen anything you fancy among the cattle?"

"I could desire nothing better than the black fellow I rode here on," said Laurence, who had taken a fancy to him on account of his fire and spirit.

"Oh, Jack gave you Black Hawk, did he?" laughed the settler. "Well, I suppose he wanted to try you."

Oh, yes, you can have him and welcome, for most of our fellows, though no muffs across an animal, fight rather shy of that beast."

"I found him quiet enough after a little while," said Laurence.

"He's yours, then," said Mr. Stewart; "and now I think I smell supper. By the way, I'll give you a regular rig out in place of that sailor toggery, if you come into this room."

And he supplied Laurence with a thick tanned

leather pair of breeches, a coarse, strong-looking shirt, and a broad-brimmed felt hat—all new and after the pattern of the other runners.

Just as they were entering the long room, from which a most savoury smell was wafted, he stopped and said:

"You haven't asked about the—the—wages yet?" Laurence coloured. The word brought home to him for the first time the reality of his changed position.

"Wages!" he replied. "Give me plenty of work and something to eat and I shall feel myself heavily in your debt."

"Bah!" said the settler, touched by his tone of sincere gratitude. "I should be a knave if I took you at your word. We'll talk the matter over after supper. Come along."

Laurence asked him to let him change his nautical costume for the clothes he had just received, and Mr. Stewart told him to go into his room.

In a few minutes—for it did not take many to slip on the rough stockings, shirt, and trowsers, nor to fill the heavy-belted belt with the revolver and bowie knife—Laurence entered the room.

The long table was groaning beneath the weight of huge dishes of roast antelope meat and beef, and a great tankard of water—of course there was no beer—glittered at intervals. There were no knives and forks, each man sitting with his bowie knife in hand, and the plates were made of wood and horn, china proving too fragile and delicate for the rough, strong hands that used them.

A score of Hottentot slaves were handing round the plates piled up with meat, which three women, all old and ugly, were cutting as if for their lives.

Three men looked up as Laurence entered, and scanned his huge, lion-like figure approvingly.

These men worshipped strength; here it was in all its glory.

Three or four of them 'made room' for him, and Laurence with a kindly thank you dropped into one of the seats beside Jack.

All there seemed equal, and it would have been difficult to detect from their manner that they were the hired servants of one man, for he was dressed as they were, and addressed them and was addressed by them with easy familiarity. Yet every man there knew that the sturdy settler would be obeyed, and also that he would be obeyed at all cost. There were some of them who could recollect a certain scene between a refractory, insubordinate runner, which had ended in a swift bullet and a short shrift, and they knew that with all Mr. Stewart's easy, good-natured way he was quite ready to give another bullet to the man who dared set him at defiance. It was a severe, merciless law, but it was the only one capable of being applied in that out-of-the-way African cattle-station, and the men acknowledged and respected it.

They were a silent, rough, yet not brutal set of men.

When they spoke it was to the purpose, but they eschewed all chat and gossip.

This taciturnity accorded with Laurence's frame of mind very well indeed, and he finished his supper with as little talk as they. After supper every man wiped his bowie knife on the sleeve of his shirt, stuck it in his belt, and took out his pipe.

Laurence accepted a pipe from Jack, and with the rest of the men strolled out into the prairie.

Here he made the acquaintance of one or two of the runners—Black Will, Red Ned, and Andy—and learnt from them that a gang of runners were expected in that night, and that on their arrival the gang now at home would mount and ride away.

"You hunt up the cattle and drive them home?" asked Laurence.

"Yes," said Andy.

"Are there any more stations than this?"

"Not for two hundred miles," said the runner. "There's one or two stations belonging to us, small huts for one to sleep in at night—they're about thirty or forty miles apart, in a sort o' circle, like. We shall beat up towards one to-morrow, most like. You'd best stick close to me for a turn or two in case you should get lost."

Laurence agreed to this, and asked him a few more questions, which he, or one of the others, answered readily.

While they were talking there came a sudden indistinct sort of sound, like the hum of a far-off multitude.

"There they be," said Jack. "Hi, hi!"

This called the slaves to hand, and the men, followed by them, sprang upon their horses, and forming a semi-circle—Laurence in the middle—drew like the wind towards the sound.

In five minutes an enormous multitude of cattle, sturdy men and buffaloes, came in sight, driven by the runners, who were covered in dust and looked as if they had ridden far.

The semicircle broke, and, manœuvring with skill





[THE GIPSYS WARNING.]  
THE MYSTERY OF  
FALKLAND TOWERS.

CHAPTER XI.

Our witches are no longer old  
And wrinkled beldames, Satan-sold,  
But young and gay and laughing creatures,  
With seeming sunshine in their features.

Judge not, lest ye be judged! No heart that  
throbs  
But hath some dark and hidden source of woe;  
And a wild laugh may mask the bitter sob  
Of a galled spirit in its overflow.

UNDER the impression that her real letter had  
been posted to her godfather Lady Florence was  
much lighter-hearted during the pleasant drive to  
Romney House.

She was convinced that she had received a proof  
of Lord Falkland's disinterestedness, and even  
thought that if she had had an opportunity to write  
her letter over again she might have left out that  
portion which branded him as an impostor.

His lordship, on his part, was gay and cheerful on  
much more substantial grounds. He was so agree-  
able as well as such an attentive listener to his fair  
companion's remarks about the gentry whose resi-  
dences they passed that her dislike for him tempo-  
rarily vanished, and she could scarcely realize that  
he was the dark, morose man he had usually seemed.

His lordship saw his advantage and did not fail to  
press it, though with the utmost caution, for he had  
set himself another part to play than that of the  
hard tyrant. But as they turned into the Romney  
estate he began to reflect upon the mortification and  
difficulty which must attend his meeting with young  
Squire Romney.

In the first place he was about to throw Lady Flo-  
rence into the society of a gentleman whom he be-  
lieved to love her passionately, though she had, ac-  
cording to the gentleman himself, refused his hand  
in marriage. In the second place he was about to  
seek a reconciliation with a man who had openly  
defied him and dashed a pistol from his hand under  
circumstances most compromising to his lordship's  
manliness and rank. In the third place this same  
Ralph Romney was the same sturdy fellow who had  
given his baronial head a most unmerciful drubbing,  
despite a brazen mask which he had worn for pro-  
tection.

But, despite all this, he was not a man to shrink  
from a mere mortification; and he felt his confi-  
dence rise as they drove up, through a handsome  
avenue of old trees, toward the fine old manor house  
of the Romney family.

"Old Judith tells me that the young squire is a

secret gamester," muttered his lordship to himself,  
as his eye roamed gloatingly over the broad acres  
and varied and beautiful scenery through which  
they were passing. "And the old squire drinks hard,  
they say. Let me but get the young bumpkin in  
London for a week or two, and all this shall be mine,  
mine!"

They alighted, but only the old squire was pre-  
sent to do the honours of reception, which he did  
with all the heartiness of country gentility. Squire  
Romney was a somewhat decayed specimen of the  
English country squire, of the old-fashioned, fox-  
hunting school. Though he was advanced in years,  
and gave evidences of excessive devotion to the  
bottle in his rubicund complexion and unsteady  
hand, he seemed to have passed a life devoid of  
care, to be good for a number of years yet.

Lord Falkland, upon being introduced by his  
cousin, grasped the old gentleman's hand most  
cordially.

"Squire Romney," said he, "I haven't seen you  
since my old vacation school-boy days, when I was  
a sad scapegrace on the baronial estates to which I  
have succeeded my late lamented uncle, as well as  
a poacher for trout in your own brook, and no doubt  
I have long ago outgrown your recollection; but  
you appear as hale and hearty as ever. You still  
follow the hounds occasionally, eh?"

"No, my lord, I am too old for that," said the  
old squire, shaking his head, and yet seemingly  
vastly pleased at his noble neighbour's condescen-  
sion and off-hand manner. "But, indeed, my lord,  
I feel highly honoured by this visit—the more  
especially since—since—"

"Since there was some old feud between our  
families of old, eh?" good-humouredly interrupted  
his lordship, who now felt convinced that Ralph  
had told his father nothing of his moonlight en-  
counter with him in the avenue of Falkland Tower,  
as he had convinced himself before that Florence  
knew nothing of it; "dash that for ever and a day,  
if you are of the same mind! Gad! I never could  
cypher out what the difficulty was anyhow; and  
we'll bury the hatchet, as the American savages say."

"With all my heart! with all my heart, my lord!"  
said the old gentleman, rubbing his hands. "Come  
in, my lady! come in, my lord! We have just  
broached the best cask of port in County Kent—  
always saving the wine-cellars of Falkland Towers."

"Excuse us, dear Squire Romney," said Lady  
Florence; "but Lord Falkland came to have a  
little talk with your son."

"With my son and man of business, and your  
old playmate, Ralph, eh? Well, he's with his  
angling-rod over there in the woodsomewhere. I'll  
send a servant for him."

fulness, drove the herd into the open, then turned to  
welcome with a kindly grunt the wearied new comers.

All night various herds came in. Laurence raised  
his head several times from his bed of hay and lay to  
listen to the dull roar of their feet and the hoarse  
"Hi! hi!" of the negroes.

So ended his first night as a cattle runner.

A week later and who would have recognized in  
the stalwart horseman flying over the plain, with his  
bare, browned chest exposed to the sun, and his luxu-  
riant hair flowing in a silken mass on his neck, the  
hire to Dale?

It was a wonderful change, and yet scarcely a  
change so much as a completion, a perfecting of the  
strong, graceful, youthful frame.

The sea trip and the glorious life had put the  
finishing touch to Laurence and made the very pat-  
tern of nature's greatest work—a man.

See him as he bends—as supple and graceful as the  
horse—and shades his eagle eyes with his strong, well-  
formed hand to scan the horizon. See the grace with  
which by a bend of his steel-like finger he turns the  
flying horse to the right, and with compressed lips  
makes for the tiny spot which his keen, practised  
eyes have detected in the far horizon. See him again  
as the cattle are speeding in a massive column before  
his long whip—the odour and the brightness of the  
flowers beneath his horse's hoofs, the bright blue  
sky above his head, the light, joyous air filling him  
with strength and health, and hear him exclaim, "Ah,  
this is life, freedom, happiness!"

Yet see him once more as the moonlight falls  
through the open door of the solitary hut, forty miles  
from human ken, and rests upon his noble form, lying  
motionless upon the tiger skin he has torn from a  
beast of his own slaying, and as you watch the weary  
light in his large, sad eyes, as you see the tired droop-  
ing of his lips, acknowledge that even here, where  
all is beautiful, and life is one long hunting-day, there  
is not happiness.

Yes, the weary yet sleepless eyes of the lonely  
cattle runner are looking past the dim forest outline,  
past the looming range of hills, past the deep stretch  
of ocean, and gazing at a small country village far,  
far away.

Patience, Laurence, patience! The time is draw-  
ing nigh when the desolated, despairing heart you  
carry within your bosom shall leap into life with a  
new sensation, with a new hope, with a new passion  
—love! For even now in that far-away village the  
ingredients of the magic elixir are seething and bub-  
bling in the cauldron of fate.

(To be continued.)

"No; I prefer to run for him myself," said she, gaily; "I know every pathway of Romney Park as well as our own."

She ran off laughing.

His lordship bit his lip till the blood started, but could not choose but to remain behind; so he resolved to use his time to the best advantage.

"You are indeed happy, Squire Romney," said he, "to have a son to whom you can entrust the entire control of your large estate—for thus I understood you when you called him your man of business."

"Precisely, my lord. I have a steward, too, but nothing more than as Ralph's factotum. Ralph—would you believe it, my lord?—can at any moment draw a cheque to the amount of all I am worth, and mortgage Romney Park and house to their full value."

"Rather an extraordinary confidence I should think," remarked his lordship, dryly, but with glistering eyes.

"Perhaps so, my lord, but not misplaced, I assure you!" said the squire. "Ah, there she is again!" he added, starting back and clutching his lordship by the arm. "Did you see her? Do you know her, my lord?"

It was Judith who had flitted through the cedars at the foot of the lawn, shooting up a single glance from her black eyes as she drew her red cloak around her.

"I saw no one but an elderly gipsy woman, who sometimes prowls about the castle in a harmless way," replied his lordship.

"Ah, but she's a witch, my lord!" muttered the squire, whose cheerfulness had suddenly vanished. "Come in, though, and try my old port, my lord."

"I may learn something of this dotard worth knowing, after all," thought Lord Falkland as he followed Squire Romney into the manor house.

But he cast a black and uneasy look down the pathway which Florence had taken, in her quest of Ralph Romney, before he crossed the threshold.

The wine was soon before them in a handsome oaken chamber.

His lordship praised it highly, and Squire Romney drank it deeply.

"So there is something vicious, then, about Judith, squire?" said his lordship, who made a pretence of drinking much more of the generous liquor than he actually did.

Squire Romney, when over-influenced by his unfortunate failing, was certainly in his dotage; and the gipsy woman was his favourite theme when he had an auditor of his own quality.

"She may not be to every one, my lord, but she is to me and mine," said he, with gloomy confidence. "She is, I feel, linked with my destiny, as she is with my history. She is my evil genius. But why bore you with the tale of my domestic life, which is well known over all the country-side?"

"Nay, squire, it would not bore me, I assure you, but might prove interesting," said Lord Falkland, who knew nothing of the story that Judith had related to Madame La Grande, which latter lady often had reasons for keeping certain things to herself. "Proceed, squire, if it won't distress you," he added, filling the squire's already oft-emptied glass.

The latter reflected deeply for a few moments, and then spoke in a voice somewhat thickened by wine, but slow and deliberative.

"Nearly twenty-five years ago," said he, "my father was still alive, and I was a wild young fellow at home with nothing to do but to fish, ride, shoot, and make love to the tenants' pretty daughters. It was then that I fell in with a gipsy girl, the princess of her tribe, and who—was Judith. She was barely fifteen, and possessed of a wild, dark beauty, beside a culture far beyond her station, which completely enthralled me.

"My father was in declining years, and I was my own master. The roving life of the gipsies had always possessed a charm for me, and now the fascination of the beautiful Judith led me to spend weeks and months in their camps, following them hither and thither, learning and speaking their language, and living as one of their tribe. Judith reciprocated my passion ardently.

"At last, in an evil moment, when swept along by the tide of my love, I betrothed myself to her, solemnly vowing to marry her so soon as the decease of my invalid father should make me a free and independent gentleman. He died a year later, and my gipsy life was, temporarily at least, at an end. I took possession of the manor house. When the respect proper to my father's memory had elapsed in time gay friends came from London, and we had a long series of festivities.

"It was arranged that I should make my *début* in town. Shortly before quitting Romney House for London I met Judith in the wood. Even then—fresh as I was from the daily society of the most elegant and beautiful women of the world—her wild beauty resumed its sway over me, and I repeated my vows, with many fervid assurances that,

after a brief sojourn in the metropolis, I would return to fulfil them.

"She believed me. Indeed we both believed in each other at the time. In London I had evil advisers, and plunged, without a thought, into a wild whirl of dissipation. Instead of seeking the society of those to whom my birth, fortune and education called me, I sought the company of my inferiors in rank, became the patron and admirer of dancers and actresses, and, though I never gambled, drank to excess.

"I became in love with a young actress of talent, who was then causing a furore at never mind what theatre, on account of her extraordinary beauty, as well as her histrionic merit. Never mind her name. She was entrancingly lovely. I asked nothing of her antecedents. I forgot Judith. I married her. We came to live here at the manor with company more gay than select.

"My happiness was, indeed, of brief duration. I discovered that my wife, despite her youth—she was only eighteen when I married her—was already old in infancy. She was of low French origin, of antecedents black with deception, and even crime, and had married me merely to fleece me of my wealth. My lord, she was a beautiful fiend—a monster of iniquity!"

"Of French origin, did you say?" exclaimed Lord Falkland, who had become deeply interested in the squire's narrative.

"Yes, my lord; but it matters not. I stood her temper, her spoliation, her intrigues with low actors—who sought to make my house their home—and her general iniquities, for four years, during which she three times attempted my life with poison. She bore me two sons, Ralph and Robert, and one of the idiosyncrasies of her utterly evil nature was the hatred—yes, my lord, the positive hatred she bore her own children. She wished them dead—because they were mine, she said, but more, I think, on account of the ingained evil of the woman's nature. I kept them from her sight, and at last would hold no communication whatever with her, simply allowing a moderate sum of pocket-money for her personal use. Seeing that there was nothing more to be gained or robbed from me, she one day absconded, taking all the money there was in the house, all the family jewels, and what else of value she could lay her hands on. She went to London, to one of her countless admirers—a low, shrewd rascal."

"His name?" said Lord Falkland, leaning forward.

"Faith, my lord, I don't know that I ever heard it," said Squire Romney; "but he must have had a hundred aliases."

"How long ago was this, squire?"

"Eighteen years," replied the squire, after a momentary pause.

His lordship drew a long breath, and Romney went on:

"I was overjoyed, of course, to get rid of such a Jezebel, and in a few months obtained an easy divorce. After hearing of that, I afterwards learned, the woman married her infamous lover, and one day Robert, my second child, was missing. Of course, I knew the mother must have stolen him—probably for no other purpose than to bring him up to a career of crime that would bring shame and sorrow upon his father's head. Up to this time I had made no attempt whatever to seek the mother; but now, shuddering at the bare thought of that innocent infant life being confined to such infamous tuition, I resolved to hunt her down. She successfully eluded me, however. I never heard of either mother or child again. Perhaps both are dead."

"Are you sure it was the mother who stole the child, Squire Romney?"

"Sure of it? Of course I am. Who else could have done so?"

"You forget the person whose name was the initial of your story—the gipsy woman, Judith."

"No; I was coming to her, my lord. She would not have stolen the child—it wasn't in her nature. She would have slain him, and left his mangled body as a signal of her revenge and hate. When I returned to the manor with my young wife from London, Judith had but one interview with me, and that was to curse me and mine for ever. She predicted the infamy of the woman I had married—against whom, more even than myself, her wild hate seemed to centre—and then disappeared from the neighbourhood. At least she was seldom seen, although I felt a sort of oppression in the air, as though she were ever near me. She has been much about here of late, however, and I have come to dread her as my evil genius. Whenever I encounter her by chance, as I happened to do to-day—before we entered the house—I see a malevolence in her quick-flashing black eyes which causes me instinctively to shudder and to feel that the gipsy's curse is moving to its climax."

"Pshaw! you would not fear a ragged wanderer?"

"Ay, my lord, but I would and do," said old Romney, filling another glass of port with an unsteady

hand. "Ah, my lord, every closet has its skeleton, they say."

"Of course it has," thought his lordship to himself; "but every one is not such an idiot as to expose its contents to the world."

"Hark," said Squire Romney; "I hear their voices on the path. Let us go out upon the terrace, my lord, for Lady Florence must have brought the truant home at last."

#### CHAPTER XII.

Now warnin' tak ye, gentle lass,  
If frae the gipsy's tongue;  
It muckle power possessed to warn  
When Time himself was young.

Old Scotch Ballad.

LADY FLORENCE knew, as she had gaily vaunted, the nooks and pathways of Romney Park almost as well as those of her native Falkland, but after quitting Lord Falkland and Squire Romney she threaded many of them before finding the object of her search. At last she began to call, in her clear, ringing voice:

"Ralph! Ralph! where are you?"

"It would be well for you that he were far away!" said a low voice from the copse, and the lady started back as the sudden apparition of Judith crossed her way.

"G gracious! how you startled me, Judith!" she exclaimed, for she had known the gipsy woman from her childhood. "What a way you Romney dames have of coming upon people unawares!"

"Yes; but if we mean them good instead of evil why should it differ how we come?" said the gipsy woman, leaning on her staff. "Do not be in great haste, my pretty lady; you'll find him whom you seek in good time."

"What did you mean by the expression you first associated me with, Judith?"

"I told you your fortune many and many a time for your amusement when you were a child, my lady," said Queen Judith, casting a kindly eye upon the beauty of the fair girl. "Give me your palm now, and let me read it in all the solemnity of the dim future."

Lady Florence extended her little white hand, which the gipsy took in hers.

"You are having sore trouble already, my lady, but there is more and sorer in store for you," said the gipsy, bending over the little palm and tracing its delicate lines with her thin finger. "Ha! you love the Romney then?"

The proud girl's cheek flushed crimson and she made an angry effort to withdraw her hand, but the other held it firmly.

"Beware of him, lady, beware of him!" continued the woman. "There is a mighty curse upon the race, and naught but ruin and disgrace is to be his portion. There was one who loved you dearly once—a cousin."

"He says he loves me still, and I hate him!"

"Him! Ay, the present Baron of the Towers; but I referred to your cousin, child. So, so; what have we here?"

Lady Florence caught at the gipsy's words, with a heart full of sudden hope.

"Tell me, Queen Judith, tell me, as you love me, is the present Lord Falkland not my kinsman, then, but an impostor?"

Queen Judith shook her head slowly, and raised her eyes to the lady's face.

"It is perilous for me to speak aught against the high and mighty, lady. But tell me, could you see your cousin again as you know him of old, only older, nobler and better than then—could you see him again, with his handsome face, his free, frank smile, and clear dark eyes, and, at the same time, be assured that he still loves you dearly, could you return his love?"

"Were any one else to speak thus to me I should be very angry, Judith," said Lady Florence, again flushing crimson.

"Nay, but you must not be angry with me, pretty one; for I am wise—I know much, and would do anything for your happiness. You loved Romney, even when you refused his hand; was it not so? You love him still; is it not true?"

The lady bit her lip.

"You shall not speak to me any more! You are an insolent old woman! Let me pass at once, Queen Judith!"

"And this," continued Judith, not budging an inch—"this self-crushed passion, to which you dare not yield, for fear of the father's curse such yielding must entail upon you—this, together with the persecutions of your bitter enemies, who daily spread their golden webs around you, must constitute your shrouded life. Poor heart so true, to be broken and crushed! Poor life, so young to be hurried and destroyed!"

There was an infinite tenderness in the gipsy's voice as she pronounced these words, and Lady Florence's anger of a moment before was followed by flowing tears.

"I know not how you divine so much," she murmured, "but a shroud indeed seems falling over my



young life. I feel that I am surrounded by my enemies, who seek to destroy my happiness and perhaps my life itself. Turn which way I will they confront me. I know not how to escape them."

"You may escape them, child," exclaimed the old woman, drawing nearer. "You can have my assistance, which in this respect you will find all-powerful, upon one condition—that you banish the Romney from your heart!" hissed Judith.

"Have I not done so? I know not the animus of your hatred of my old playmate, Ralph Romney; but you ought to know by your gift of divination—you seem to know so much already—that he can never be anything to me but a friend."

"He must not be even that, lady. He must not be even that!"

"Stand out of my path, Judith!" exclaimed Lady Florence, waving her hand. "You forget my rank—perhaps I also have forgotten it in bearing with you so long."

"Remember what I have told you, or you will work your own fate for evil, pretty one!" sneered Queen Judith, stepping aside.

Lady Florence swept on without a word. She at last found the young squire lounging lazily by the brook, with his fishing-rod. He met her with pleasure and surprise, and Lady Florence gave him a succinct account of everything that had happened since their meeting on the previous evening, as well as the object of his lordship's visit to Romney House.

The young squire was almost bewildered by what he heard.

"Why, then, your kinsman is not such a mean fellow as we thought him," said he. "I almost believed him to be a ruffian and a rascal."

"You mustn't talk so, Ralph," said Lady Florence. "At any rate you should remember that he has now come to offer you his hand."

"That I should, and he shall have it," exclaimed Ralph, gathering up his tackle; "although from the manner in which he acted at our last meeting I should think—hum. Bother this tackle!"

"What were you saying, Ralph? Why, in what manner did he treat you? You never met him but once, you know, and that was in the castle drawing-room on the evening that Madame La Grande first arrived."

"Oh, ah, yes; but—both this running gear—but don't you remember how black he scowled at me as he went out to leave you and me to ourselves?"

"Oh, that was nothing. Was that all?"

"Wasn't that enough? But perhaps after all I am too sensitive. There! I've got the tackle all right at last, and we will go to the manor at once."

Lady Florence said nothing to the young man about her interview with Judith, perhaps because her recital of it would have caused her much more confusion and pain than it would him.

"There they are waiting for us on the terrace," said Lady Florence, as they emerged from the wood.

Lord Falkland ground his teeth as he saw the comely young couple coming so familiarly, side by side, toward the house.

But, nevertheless, he was pleased to see that Lady Florence had created a more favourable impression of himself in the mind of young Romney, whose honest and mobile countenance was a ready index of his thoughts.

His lordship made his compliments with grace and dignity, and they were received with great heartiness by young Ralph, whose ardour was considerably checked when the former said, pointedly:

"We are in a few weeks to have company, Mr. Romney, and then your presence at the castle will afford us sincere pleasure."

The evening was drawing late, and after brief adieux the dog-cart was driven round, and the Falklands took their departure.

#### CHAPTER XIII.

This is a traveller, sir; knows men and manners, and has ploughed up the sea so far Till both the poles have knuckled; and seen the sun

Take coach, and can distinguish the colour Of his horses and their kind.

Beaumont and Fletcher.

A NUMBER of weeks had passed. Workmen had been at work all through the castle, the interior of which assumed a freshness and splendour which it had not known for many years.

Lord Falkland had been to London and invited a number of friends, who were daily expected to arrive at the castle.

He was uniformly gay and cheerful. Madame La Grande was the soul of amiability. And little Lady Florence began really to think that there was some happiness in store for her.

One day, while they were thus anticipating the invited guests, his lordship requested a private interview with Lady Florence. When they were seated he said to her, with well-simulated embarrassment:

"My dear cousin, I have a confession to make to

you of a certain deception I have been compelled to practise, and then ask your forgiveness."

"Through the influence of certain misfortunes Madame La Grande has been compelled to assume a character in this castle and in the world far different and far inferior to her real rank and station. By birth she is connected with one of the oldest and noblest families in Normandy, and she is, or rather was, the wife of the Marquis Achille de la Grande, with whose fame at one time all Europe rang."

"Although of a family of prodigious antiquity, he became early imbued with the revolutionary principles advocated by some of his countrymen, and espoused them with all his heart, but to the serious detriment of his rank and fortune."

"But after the treachery of the *coup d'état*, and the accession of Louis Napoleon to the throne, the marquis, as if by a strange and unfortunate infatuation for the side opposed to the ruling power, became a violent Orleanist, and as such, of course, a proscribed and exiled man."

"It was as such that I met him and his unfortunate marquise (to whom he had been married while still in the possession of his rank and fortune) in my wild and cheerless wanderings among the mountains of Spain. I was enabled to assist them but little pecuniarily, but we became friends in our mutual desolation and misfortune."

"His delicate frame fast declined under the hardships to which his exile subjected him. His noble wife clung to him with all the devotion of a true and loving heart; but he died in her arms, and in my presence, but otherwise totally friendless, in an obscure hamlet of the hills."

Lord Falkland paused as if overcome by bitter and painful recollections; while Lady Florence was greatly interested and surprised with the specious story he had just fabricated, but which she had no just cause to suppose was anything but the truth.

"The noble widow," continued his lordship, "was left utterly destitute. My own condition was desperate in the extreme; for I was also a wanderer, nameless and friendless in a strange and never hospitable land."

"With a certain indifferent skill as a gamester—I blush to own it, my dear cousin, but even to such straits was I forced by adversity—I managed to scrape together a small sum of money, which, with the sale of her few remaining jewels, enabled the marquise to proceed to Paris in disguise."

"Before separating from her I had advised her to endeavour to earn a subsistence in the French capital as a teacher of music and languages, which she promised to do."

"Years after, but not very long ago—indeed, directly after my arrival in England, after receiving my lamented uncle's letter—I met the noble lady in London."

"Her real rank had been discovered by the Parisian police, and, once more an exile, she had sought refuge in the British metropolis, where I found her earning a most precarious subsistence by the exercise of her accomplishments as linguist and musician."

"With her customary reckless generosity, she had added to her worldly burden by befriending the little Annette, who is now your lady's maid."

"With the brightening prospects opening before me, in my anticipated reconciliation with my noble relative—"

Lord Falkland again paused and his lip shook, but he recovered himself in a moment.

"I rejoiced that it might soon be in my power to aid the afflicted gentlewoman materially. The result was her reception in Falkland Towers as Madame La Grande."

"She shrank, with a true woman's modesty, from having her real rank made known to you in her humiliation and poverty."

"But a few days ago she received intelligence that one of the minor estates of her deceased husband had been released from the ban of confiscation, and, at the same time, she received by mail a number of the family jewels which had been left in the hands of the authorities when she fled, years ago, from her husband's palace. She instantly sought me, proposing to quit the castle and resume her station and title in the world, but at the same time regretting the step, inasmuch as it would take her from you, to whom she has become strangely attached."

"I counselled her to wait until I had acquainted you, my dear cousin, with her history, and see if you had any objection to her remaining in a vastly altered capacity—in other words, as our friend, our equal, and our honoured guest."

Lady Florence was greatly surprised and embarrassed by what she had heard, and hardly knew what answer to make. Even while she was deliberating her confusion was augmented by the entrance of Madame La Grande herself, and with a transformation of her mien and garb that was wonderful to behold.

She was attired in an elegant evening dress of wine-coloured velvet, with a flowing train.

A large brooch of diamonds heaved in the rise and fall of her grand bosom; a tiera of the same gems, but almost as narrow as a thread, glittered in the Pompadour of her rich dark hair and over her snowy brow, beneath which the large eyes blazed with all the pride and dignity of a duellist born.

Lady Florence's fashionable life had almost wholly been confined to the out-of-town nobility and gentry among whom she lived and moved.

Save an occasional visit to the castle of her godfather, the Earl of Glenmearg, she had but little knowledge of the great cities of the world; and now as a queenly representative of that vast mysterious world, whose splendours had hitherto been but heresy to her, arose before her, she was dazzled and delighted as a child would have been.

"Oh, how beautiful! how radiant!" she exclaimed, springing up and clapping her hands. "But now you are—Madame La Marquise, I suppose?"

"No, my dear young lady," said the transformed housekeeper, blushing with apparent embarrassment, but advancing, and taking the young lady's hand, "still and always Madame La Grande; for circumstances will not yet permit me to resume my real title. And, indeed, I am glad of it. By the humble title I first won your esteem; by the same I would retain it, as—as your friend—your guest, if you will. But I may be too hasty," she added, drawing back with some emotion, and questioning his lordship with a glance. "Has your lordship told Lady Florence all? and has she expressed any dislike, any objection—?"

"No, no! it will be most delightful!" cried Lady Florence, seizing both the dissembler's hands in hers. "I am so surprised and happy! You will tell me more of your romantic history some time, won't you, dear?"

"Most willingly, my child," said Madame La Grande, throwing her arm about her waist, while his lordship looked out of the window, to chafe in his sleeve. "But I knew, I felt we were born for each other."

"Indeed, it must be so," said the other; "but I must dress for the evening, or I shall appear as nothing beside your queenliness. I shall go upstairs at once. Annette, Annette!" and Lady Florence ran out of the room.

Lord Falkland and his fellow-conspirator had only time to exchange a glance of mutual triumph when a noise of carriage wheels on the gravelled road without, together with a bustle of servants in the halls, summoned them both to the window.

The guests from London were coming.

Lady Florence was down—superbly dressed, but much more simply than the elder lady—in time to receive them, assisted by Madame La Grande.

His lordship did the honours from the hall to the drawing-room, and performed the task of introducing his friends to the ladies with dignity and grace.

Over a dozen guests arrived that evening.

Lady Florence, despite her comparative ignorance of the world, was intuitively repelled by the majority of those who came.

The gentlemen, including two or three live lords, were either broken-down rouds, penniless gamblers, or faded fops; and some were desperate and vicious characters, whose aristocratic names were but part and parcel of numberless aliases.

The ladies included a number of handsome adventuresses, besides one or two of real rank, but equally vicious, and admitted to few circles of even commercial gentility.

Many of them were already known to Madame La Grande; and though Lady Florence knew nothing of their actual antecedents, and could only vaguely feel that they were not of her sphere, she did the honours of the lady of the castle with gentle grace and beauty.

Divested of their over-garments by the obsequious servants in the hall, they passed in and bowed and courtesied with worldly ease.

"Lord Fitz-Granmont and lady."

"Sir Plantagenet de Vavasour."

"The Countess of Arandel."

"The Honourable Percy Redesdale."

"Hugo Withers, and his young cousin, Miss Felicia Withers."

"Captain Diggs, the renowned tiger-hunter of Bengal."

"Mr. Gipsajoker, his cousin and friends, from Calcutta."

And a few others.

Lady Fitz-Granmont was lofty, but desirous to please. The Countess of Arandel was witty and vivacious to a degree, and, at the same time, very handsome. Miss Felicia was apparently bashful and retiring, as well as pretty and young; and to her Lady Florence inclined the most, as all the ladies grouped together, the converse being mostly confined to the journey from London and the compliments of the day.

"I trust we shall be able to entertain you all pleasantly," said Lady Florence, addressing her-

self more particularly to Miss Withers. "Have you known my cousin—Lord Falkland, long?"

"I never saw him before this evening, my lady," said the young girl, simply. "My cousin Hugo told me that he was first introduced to his lordship by his grace the Duke of Norfolk."

"Well, you will like our castle as well as others, I trust."

"I never was in a castle before, my lady," replied Miss Felicia, still more simply.

"I know we shall find the Towers far more interesting than my own Arundel, nevertheless," said the lively countess, whose pretty black eyes always shone brightly, although her comely features were something faded and worn. "You are, of course, bound, Lady Florence, to show us all the old pictures and armour, and to tell us every legend and ghost-story connected with your charming castle."

"Certainly, countess, but I doubt if you will find them so interesting, after mingling so much with great people," said Lady Florence. "You, I believe, have known my cousin—I mean Lord Falkland—for a long time."

"N-n-o-o!" stammered the countess, in some confusion. "That is, he is a frequent visitor at my box at the opera."

Madame La Grande was framing some digression, to cut short this innocent inquisition, when the announcement of dinner saved her the trouble.

Falkland Towers had always been famous for its dinners; but the state and conventionality of the present one were greatly invaded by the glib tongue and free-and-easy manners of the renowned Captain Diggs.

This far-travelled cosmopolitan, with Lady Florence on his left, and the countess on his right, astonished one and amused both, as well as every one within hearing, by his inexhaustible fund of anecdotes. His manner was nervous, swift and flighty, and his person, with his clear blonde complexion, luxuriant hair and whiskers, and dark, beaming eye, were eminently in his favour, while he whipped out every extravagance with a merry sang-froid that would have caused laughter in the dreariest misanthrope.

"But, captain," said the countess, laughing heartily at one of his sallies, "is it possible that you could have danced so nimbly among all these wild beasts without suffering any harm yourself?"

"I leave it all to my cousin, Doctor Gipsajoker, over there," said the captain, nodding to his friend, who sat opposite, and whose face was ambushed by a beard of patriarchal magnitude. "He was in Calcutta at the time. Speak out, doctor!"

"Yes, my lady, the story was related by the Rajah much as the captain has given it to you," said the gentleman referred to, whose chief characteristic was a gloomy solemnity of tone and manner. "It occurred shortly before the captain disposed of the great man-eater of the Punjab district."

"Ah, but that was a trifling affair, mere child's play," said Diggs, cracking walnuts between his thumb and forefinger as if they were ground-nuts—"mere baby-play, I assure you."

"But do tell us about it, captain!" cried the countess.

"Pray do not if it is horrible," said Lady Florence.

"Horrible! nothing but the trick of a puppet-show, I assure you, my lady. You see I was travelling to the interior with Christmas presents for the children of my old friend, Ali Rub-a-Jub, the Rajah of the district. Got into the village, found all the natives in terrible state of fright; big man-eating tigers had been playing old Harry in the district for many months; gobbled up two or three women and any number of children every week; all began to shy Buddhist testaments and Sanscrit hymn-books at my head, begging me to clean out the tigers. Happy idea struck me. Among my presents for old Rub-a-Jub's young ones was an enormous doll-baby, all wax from top to toe and stuffed with fine-cut horse-hair. 'Mahmoud,' said I to the most trusted of my thirty-six servants, 'follow me with the wax-doll baby.' Sprang into the jungle, with my two-barrelled rifle and three bunches of fire-crackers, just about dusk. Found trail, ordered Mahmoud to set up doll-baby and imitate the squeal of a six-year-old and then lay down in tall grass and lit a cheroot. Mahmoud squealed and squealed lustily. Pretty soon down came mistress tigers with a roar, and followed by thirteen cubs. An instant afterward and her teeth were sunk gum-deep into the doll, and there they stuck. Wax and hair together, she was all but choked. Then I lit the fire-crackers and threw them under her. Wild beasts hate fire. She danced about like a Tom-cat in a fit, jumping six feet at every pop of the crackers. Doll caught fire and began to smoke up into her nose and send hot wax down her throat. Then she saw me. Thank you, countess, I will take a glass of wine with you and esteem it an honour."

"But the story—what became of you, captain?" exclaimed a number of voices.

"Became of me? Why, here I am."

"No, but the tigress?"

"Oh, I put a two-pound bullet in her chest, and that was the end of her. Got her skin at my lodgings now. Measures eighteen feet from the tip of tail to bridge of nose."

"Where did you pick up that buffoon?" whispered Madame La Grande to Lord Falkland, who occupied the next seat to her.

"At the club in town, confound him, with his yarns!" growled his lordship. "But he's popular—a capital whist-player, and I was advised to invite him."

(To be continued.)

## THE YOUNG LOCKSMITH.

### CHAPTER XIII.

"GIVE the 'middle-men' the go-by, Ned," suggested Captain Blount as the young locksmith shook his hand at parting. "Dodge the agents, my boy, and go straight to headquarters yourself."

"If you think it best I'll do so, sir."

"By all means. That's my notion, Ned. When aboard ship if a sharp gale comes up I take my trick at the helm, regular. What's worth doing at all's worth doing well. Steer your craft in this breeze, and if you run her under it's your look out. Do your business yourself, and you're more sure it's done to your liking, whatever comes."

"I'll go to London and see to it all personally, captain," said Ned, with a cheerful "Good-bye, sir. I'll shortly see you again."

"Good luck to you, my boy. Never say die. Get out your patent and then up and at 'em. If you want more money don't forget that old Joe Blount's got a shot in the locker still; and never let the want of it prevent your making a sure thing of your patent. Good-bye. A pleasant trip to you, and a happy return, my boy."

The next morning Ned was at the office three hours before anybody else put in an appearance; but by ten o'clock the hard-working clerks began to drop in, and at eleven our ardent young inventor found a man who directed him to a desk numbered 1, in room 4, at which sat a Mr. Agg, lazily poring over the morning paper.

Ned had his working-model under his arm, and politely informed Mr. Agg that he desired to take out letters patent for a new invention of his.

"A what?" asked Mr. Agg, without taking his eyes from the news-column he was reading.

"A new invention, sir," said Ned.

"Well, what of it? Where's your papers?"

"I want to get them, sir; I haven't any yet."

"What's the use of your bothering me, then? Mr. Bagg's the man you want to see."

"Bag pardon, sir; I'm a stranger here; where is Mr. Bagg if you please?"

"Bagg? Upstairs, second-floor, turn to the right, room 42, left hand, beyond second angle, foot of corridor, west," said Mr. Agg.

And he wheeled his rotating stool about, presented his back to his visitor, and went on reading his paper.

Ned turned about, sought the door, and started to find Mr. Bagg.

He went in the wrong direction, and, having travelled half an hour unsuccessfully, came back, and was put in the right way to find Mr. Bagg.

After a few minutes' talk with this gentleman he directed him downstairs to Mr. Cagg, through the arch, left-hand passage, fourth door from corner, room 12.

He would tell him where to go to find Mr. Dagg, Receiving Clerk, which was the man he wanted to begin with.

Ned found Mr. Cagg—a very pleasant man—who referred him promptly to Mr. Dagg, right across the hall, third room on the left.

Mr. Dagg heard Ned's story, and sent him to Mr. Fagg, who had just come in—at twelve o'clock—after his mid-day lunch. He looked at Ned, glanced at his little model-box, and pointed him to the other room, east.

"Mr. Gagg's your man, sir. Yes, yonder; No. 46," and he turned on his heel.

The young man soon discovered Mr. Gagg, who vouchsafed the remark that "the machine was not included in the class of implements belonging to his section; but Mr. Hagg, No. 78, downstairs, would attend to the case."

Down went Ned to 78. Mr. Hagg was out; but he learned that his associate-clerk, Mr. Jagg, would look into it.

Mr. Jagg appeared, put on his glasses, glanced at the box, and sent Ned to Mr. Kagg, who "had his hands full for three weeks, at the least," he said, and sent the patient young stranger to Mr. Lagg, who was a moping, slow-moving man, very hard of hearing, and slow of speech.

"Who'd you say?" he inquired.

"Corson—Edward Corson, sir."

"Well, what is it, Mr. Crowson?"

"Corson, sir," said Ned again, in a loud tone,

"What's a corson? What do you want?"

"That's my name!" shouted Ned. "I want to get the papers for a patent for my new invention here."

And he opened the box and drew out his safe-lock model.

"Oh—ah—I see! Yes. Well, Mr. Grososon—"

"Corson I said, sir."

"Oh, I hear you. You must go to Mr. Magg—up two flights, Mr. Gershan. Overhead, No. 124. Mr. Magg'll attend to you, Mr. Corsum."

"That's a valuable man for a small party, I should say," observed Ned, as he left deaf Mr. Lagg. "I should think if the Government had a good many of his sort things would go on lively here."

He had no difficulty in finding Mr. Magg. He knew nothing about Ned's little matter, however—and evidently didn't want to. He thought "Mr. Nagg"—downstairs again—"was his man."

Down went Ned. The weather was hot, and he had worked himself into a reeking perspiration by this time. He found Mr. Nagg, who took some notes of Ned's wish, and sent him forward to Mr. Oagg—a German, who spoke English indifferently, but who was very civil and polite.

"You will 'ave to consult Mishter Pagg," said Oagg. "Ee's on the yurst floor, above shairs. Ee vill kiy you a baper as vill boot you in ter right vay to kit vat you want. Mishter Pagg, if you bleese. Noomber sheventy-vivo—Eggshaminer."

Away went Ned to 75. Mr. Pagg heard him patiently, wrote a line on a card, and said, briefly:

"Take this to Mr. Quagg, sir."

"Where is he?"

"Over the way, sir. Yonder—room 97."

Easily found.

Mr. Quagg was the man, evidently, at last. He turned the lock over, looked into it, made more notes, handed Ned another slip of paper, and told him to "call on Mr. Ragg."

Mr. Ragg was close by. He turned Ned over to Mr. Sagg, and named a new party to Mr. Corson—a Mr. Tagg—who thought the model a good thing "though it was none of his business to pass an opinion on anything in that department. But Mr. Vagg, on the lower floor, large room in the east corner, up three steps, glass door, front—could inform Mr. Corson all about it."

Mr. Vagg was discovered—but he didn't happen to be the right man for this particular description of invention. Mr. Wagg was the individual he should have gone to. He was at desk No. 31, section 5, overhead.

Mr. Wagg was a jolly old boy. He was a little in years—but he was able yet to eat a hearty meal, swallow his jorum of punch, and to draw his pay, monthly, for his valuable services, which he had done, steadily, for a quarter of a century.

"All right, Mr. Crowson."

"Mr. Corson, if you please," suggested Ned.

"Ah, yes. I see. Cawain—Mr. Quagg had it right—"

Mr. Wagg then wrote his name on Quagg's slip of paper, and directed Ned to Mr. Xagg, who told the applicant he must "take his parcel to Bureau 6, where he would meet Mr. Yagg, who would take charge of the model, and report."

Mr. Xagg had gone to dinner. He wouldn't be back till next day. The desks were being deserted. But Ned was informed in Bureau 6 that if he hurried, "he might catch Mr. Zagg, who would answer his purpose all the same." And he "hurried" accordingly—though he was pretty nearly fagged out with his day's work.

Mr. Zagg was the last man in the building. It was "past hours," but he took "Mr. Gowerson's" name and address, relieved Ned of his box and model—told him it was "all correct, and he could call again—it would be attended to in due course," and, locking his door, he wriggled briskly down the stone steps and away in the distance.

Ned Corson was not a happy man at the close of his day's experience. He had run the gauntlet of clerks in that department from A to Z, but all he had learned so far was that "he could call again, and that his little matter would be attended to in due course."

"When?" he asked himself.

If this was all he had achieved in a whole day's running, querrying and badgering, from pillar to post and back again—when would he be able to get possession of the desired papers?

As he asked himself this question aloud, in a somewhat excited tone, the echo of his voice came from the now deserted walls of the building—"When?"

And the anxious seeker after information under difficulties went to his hotel to rest, after his weary and unsatisfactory round of excitement.

But he had so far barely commenced to encounter the arrogance that awaited him in his effort to secure his letters patent.



Ned retired early. His slumbers were uneasy and fitful.

He dreamed of walking barefoot, on a long journey, over hot paving-stones, and breathing unwholesome air, while at every angle he met offensive countenances, odd faces, suspicious-looking beasts, and after these a host of reptiles, anacondas and cormorants.

Then he reached a strange edifice of immense proportions, a huge factory—which he entered, where he found queer men, big and little, short and tall—old and young; ten thousand—an army of them. And each was striving to outdo his neighbour in the details of the art they practised there, as to how they should contrive to work the least and be paid the most.

Ned looked around him, but recognized no one until he saw the face of the man who took charge of the "box and model of his burglar-proof safe lock."

It was the same individual whose initials—Z. Z.—he saw placed upon the slip of paper given him by Mr. Zagg.

When he rose next morning few people were up, but he had a very pleasant stroll; and at eleven o'clock he ventured to drop in at the office of Mr. Zagg, to see what progress had been made toward the preparation of his letters-patent for "Corson's Improved Safe Lock."

Mr. Zagg was at his post. Indeed, to speak the truth, this clerk was usually at his post—in office hours; to wit, from ten till two or three. He was now at his desk, and Ned bade him good-morning. Mr. Z. did not evidently see the zealous would-be patentee. At any rate he did not reply.

Mr. Zagg was an old clerk there. He had served a long apprenticeship at his profession. He had been in the office four-and-twenty years, come Michaelmas. If Mr. Zagg didn't "know the ropes" who should?

He was a nervous man; angular—crochety—but civil to strangers if they did not annoy him with unnecessary questions.

Ned knew that Mr. Zagg was the twenty-fifth clerk to whom he had been sent, after being banded about till he was well nigh clean off his legs, and he observed that Mr. Z. made a brief memorandum the day previously upon his safe-lock model, and then placed it away in one of the innumerable pigeon-holes at the back of his desk, where it would remain to take its "due course" at some future day—if nothing happened to prevent, and Mr. Zig-Zag had time, or should chance to run across it again, as he probably wouldn't for many months.

So when Ned made his appearance the next morning after Mr. Zagg had condescended to go thus far in "Mr. Gowerson's" business (for this was the name he had endorsed upon Ned's parcel, erroneously) the cross-grained, fidgety examiner of new inventions thought it a very extraordinary piece of effrontery on the would-be patentee's part to push himself under his notice again so soon.

But he didn't say so; and Ned proceeded once more to investigate his chances as to the prospect of getting his papers.

Unfortunately the young man was very plainly dressed.

He thought his rather frowsy and well-worn suit of brown tweed "good enough to travel in;" while Mr. Zagg and the rest looked upon the threadbare clothes of the active locksmith as a pretty sure indication that, like most young inventors, Mr. "Gowerson" was short of funds.

"Good-morning, Mr. Zagg," said Ned, for the third time, catching Z. Z.'s eye at last.

"Ah, yes—good morning. Well sir, what can I do for you?"

Zagg didn't appear to remember him at all.

"About those papers, Mr. Zagg."

"What papers, sir?"

"The letters-patent."

"Who for?"

"Edward Corson, sir."

"When applied for?"

"Well, sir, I don't exactly know," began Ned, who wished to state that he didn't yet understand what more he had to do toward putting in his application in regular form.

But Zagg cut him short.

"Don't know, sir. Who are you?"

"I'm Mr. Corson, the pat—I mean inventor, sir."

"And you don't know when the papers were applied for?"

"Oh, yes. I began yesterday, sir."

"Ah—well. You don't expect there's been anything done so far to-day, do you? It's only eleven o'clock, sir."

"I didn't know but I might expedite the matter by calling this morning. I'm staying at an hotel at some expense, and I want to get away as soon as possible, Mr. Zagg."

"You can leave as soon as you like. I don't think there's anybody in this department who will interpose the slightest objection to that, Mr. Corson."

"Corson, if you please, Mr. Zagg. Don't make a mistake in the name. Now won't you give this matter your early attention?"

"In due course, yes, Mr. Corson."

"How long before I can hear about it?"

"What is it?"

"I've told you twelve times, Mr. Zagg, that it is a newly invented safe-lock."

"Specifications made out, Mr. Corson?"

"The what, sir?"

"Are your specifications filed yet?"

"No, sir. That's what I want to get here."

"Didn't you say you wanted letters-patent, sir?"

"Of course I do."

"How are we to commence on your case till you deposit the specifications, fees, nature of claim, and declaration of invention?"

"I am ready, sir. To whom shall I apply to arrange these preliminaries?"

"Oh, now you talk sensibly, Mr. Corson," said Zagg, seeing a prospect of getting rid of this persistent inventor. "Yes, you must go to Mr. Agg, over the way, downstairs, round to the right, room 4, desk 1."

Ned reflected as he went out, and, approaching the spot to which he was now directed by Mr. Z., he found, a moment afterward, that Mr. A., at desk No 1, was the identical person he had called on first in the list on the previous day!

Arriving there again, he soon learned that he hadn't commenced right at all, and what he had so far done amounted to nothing whatever.

Mr. A. kindly heard his story over again, however, and at last put Ned upon the track that promised, after awhile, to conduct the young pilgrim-mechanic toward the Mecca of his hopes, which he had been so earnestly endeavouring to get sight of.

But the road to the goal was still a tortuous and weary one.

After the youth's ample explanation, to the recital of which Mr. A. listened with becoming patience, that smooth-tongued gentleman started Ned away with a briefly prepared document to Mr. Bagg.

Mr. B. looked the paper over leisurely, and sent his applicant to Mr. Cagg again. Mr. C. referred him to Mr. D. D. pointed him to E., E. to F., and F. forwarded him to G. So he went resignedly through the department alphabet of clerks again without a halt, until he found himself at last before the counter of Mr. Zagg.

Pop, pop! slam, slam! went down the desk-covers as he entered Z.'s room. Time was up, and the hard-working clerks were hastening out, as Ned came in hastily and approached Z.'s desk with two or three printed and filled-up formulæ, which he presented in triumph to Mr. Zagg.

"Got 'em at last," he said, cheerfully. "Now, Mr. Zagg, if you please, I would like you to attend to my case here."

"Time, sir. What is it?"

"The papers—all ready for your inspection, sir."

"Ah, yes—Edward Corson. Well, Mr. Corson, you know we can't toil here all the time without some relaxation. We must eat, sir; and I'm just goin' to. I'll take the papers, and examine them as soon as possible."

And Zagg wriggled down from his stool, took the documents, threw them into another pigeon-hole, and put on his hat and gloves.

"When shall I look in again, Mr. Zagg?" asked Ned, submissively.

"Any time, sir. Always happy to see you."

"To-morrow?" persisted the applicant.

"No; that would be useless trouble to you. Say two weeks from to-day. You understand that everything must take its course in this department, Mr. Cawsom."

"Can't we hurry matters a little?" said Ned, pleasantly. "I am willing to pay for any extra trouble this may give you."

"Well, no, Mr. Gershon."

"Corson, sir, if you please."

"We don't hurry much in this department. We can't, you observe. Justice to all requires that we should take our time, you see. You are in line, sir. But there's five-and-eighty before you now on the docket; and we can't reach your case, possibly, for fifteen or twenty days, I think."

"What? To begin on, do you mean?" exclaimed Ned.

"Couldn't you come over after dinner," urged the tired young man, "and look at my case?"

And he slipped a five-pound note into Zagg's hand quietly as he spoke.

"This is for yourself, and I won't mind another similar fee if you'll help me out."

"That's against the rules o' the department, Mr. Growsome," responded Zagg, putting the hand containing the note into his pocket quickly.

"But I've got a friend down here," continued Z., "who is a solicitor, to whom I will hand this little document of yours, and he has access to the department under certain restrictions. He makes a business of this sort o' thing. And I think he'll push matters for you. But it'll cost you something."

"Who is he?" inquired Ned.

"Mr. Grindem."

"Grindem?" said Ned. "Can he help me?"

"Yes. I'll see him to-day. Call on him to-morrow at his office. He'll assist you."

Mr. Zagg retired, and Ned went to his hotel again to dine and rest his weary limbs.

Next morning our hero waited upon Mr. Grindem, and found that obsequious gentleman "ready to do anything in his power" for the young locksmith, "for a reasonable compensation." He had conferred with his friend, Mr. Zagg, previously, and he understood Ned's case to a dot.

"You have had some slight experience already, I believe, Mr. Corson," he said, blandly, "with the difficulties that lie in the way of the novice here who may desire to avail himself of Government privileges."

"Yes, Mr. Grindem. And I haven't made much headway, either, thus far in my mission."

"No. That's the result always with beginners. I understand what you want clearly. I will give it my personal attention, and I can aid you."

"What will be your charge, sir?"

"I can't say till we see what we've got to do. It's a long job, at the best. You may leave me a retainer to commence upon, and I'll settle your matter to your liking as soon as I can," said Grindem.

"Well, how much to begin with, sir?"

"Oh, ten pounds, say, Mr. Corson," rejoined Grindem, as if this were a mere bagatelle, anyhow.

Ned drew out his wallet, handed the agent the retainer, and requested him to hasten out his safe-lock papers at the earliest moment.

"This is upon my account, you understand," said Grindem. "The regular department fees will be in addition to my charges, you know."

"I comprehend you, sir. What I desire to accomplish is the obtaining of my patent as soon as possible."

"When shall I call on you again, Mr. Grindem?"

"To-day is the tenth, I believe. On the twenty-fifth of the month I'd like to see you, Mr. Corson."

And the anxious young inventor went his way.

(To be continued.)

## RED HELM.

### CHAPTER XIV.

Oh, happiness! our being's end and aim!  
Good, pleasure, ease, content! whatever thy  
name—

That something still which prompts th' eter-

nal sigh,

For which we bear to live or dare to die. Pope.

"HEAVEN help us!" cried Mrs. Brown.

"Ay, we are lost, sure enough!" exclaimed the whaling mate. "No hope for us now. Had we not better take to the boat?" he added, addressing Brenton.

Ere the latter could answer another shot came howling along, striking the boat and shivering it to splinters.

It passed so near Faith that one of the locks of her fair hair was severed and blown into the sea.

"You had better leave that place," said Brenton; "it is the most perilous part of the ship."

"No," answered the fair pilot, "I will not desert my post until I am forced to do it."

Meanwhile the ship now was fast settling. Her bulwarks aft were already nearly on a level with the water, and she lay over almost on her beam ends.

The Malays hailed the situation of their prey with exultant yells.

"Oh, what can we do now?" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "All is lost!"

"They shall not take us without a struggle," cried Brenton.

As he spoke he procured several cutlasses and some loaded muskets which he had noticed hanging up in the cabin.

These he distributed among the whalers.

"Little good they will do us," said the first mate.

"On the contrary, they will enable us to die like men," answered Brenton, in a calm, stern voice.

He then pointed to some spare spars and ropes which were on deck.

"Rig a raft at once, my men," said he. "We will not go down while there is a plank left."

With his own hands he assisted to make the raft, giving his directions with perfect coolness in spite of the peril of their situation.

The raft was soon ready for launching. It was dropped on the side opposite to that which the Malays were approaching.

"Now," said Brenton, "we must get these on it for a barricade," pointing to some large rolls of canvas tied together in the shape of bales, which had previously been brought up from the hold.

He was promptly obeyed, for all his companions seemed to feel the cheering magnanimity emanating from the young man.

When the preparations were completed Brenton first assisted Faith and then Mrs. Brown to the raft. The captain's wife was pale and trembling, but Faith, although serious and sad, had not lost her resolution.

Soon all were on the raft, Brenton being the last to descend. It was high time he did so, as the ship already gave signs of soon making her last plunge. "Now, then," said the young man, as he cut the rope holding the raft to the ship, "we are adrift, and may contrive to keep our assailants at bay for a while at least. They shall not have the satisfaction of capturing us without a hard struggle."

"No," said the first mate; "we are cornered, and as no quarter will be shown us we had better die struggling than to give ourselves up without a blow."

The raft, loosened from the ship, was caught by a slight current which carried it several fathoms from the vessel. The latter now lay with her stern under water and her bows up, surging from side to side, while the rumbling of the water as it poured into her hold was distinctly heard.

"She will soon go down," said Brenton.

All watched the ship, and at length beheld her make the final plunge.

First her bows with a sudden jerk went under, then she made a sidelong sheer to starboard, then down she went, diving out of sight for evermore.

This brought into full view the Malay craft on the other side. As soon as they saw the people on the raft the dusky horde set up a loud shout, while the captain aboard issued some hasty order.

"They are going to run us down," said Faith.

"They cannot do it without tacking," answered Brenton; "by which time we may get out of their way and compel them to tack again."

In fact the captain had made a mistake. His vessel as she came down passed within speaking distance of the raft.

Again the captain appeared to be giving an order.

Instantly half a dozen dusky fellows leaped, pistol in hand, on the rail of the passing craft. The others, meanwhile, stood watching them with exultation plainly depicted on their swarthy faces.

"Now, men," said Brenton, quickly, "we must turn this bale of canvas round, so that it will cover us."

He pointed as he spoke towards the roll nearest the edge of the raft.

This the men seized, and, in a moment, they had it between them and the leveled pistols of the enemy.

The latter fired just as the others had succeeded in accomplishing this manoeuvre, and their shots, as a consequence, were wasted off by the cotton canvas. The next moment the Malay was beyond pistol shot.

Again the captain was seen issuing an order.

"They are bringing one of the larger guns to bear upon us!" cried Faith.

"That may do some damage," said Brenton, quietly; "but I am in hopes they will miss their aim."

A moment later a flash of fire leaped out from the pirate's stern, and the shot came humming on. It passed over the top of one of the canvas bales, just grazing it.

"Good!" cried Brenton; "but now they are coming round, and may make a better shot next time." In fact the Malay craft was now veered round, heading this time a little to leeward of the raft.

Another gun was fired, as she passed within half a mile of the raft; but as this was somewhat hidden by the fog the aim had not been very true, and the second shot passed over the heads of the little party.

"They are tired of such work!" said Brenton, noticing that no other gun was brought to bear.

"Yes, and they are now going to lower and attack us by boat," said Faith, who had been intently watching every movement of the captain of the pirate.

"Ay, sure enough!" cried Brenton, as the Malay now came up into the wind, with everything rattling. "They think to make short work of us, but they may find it harder than they expected."

A moment after the pirate had come up into the wind a boat was seen lowered alongside.

Into it sprang a crew of several dozens of men, armed to the teeth, and commanded by a sturdy-looking fellow stripped to the waist, his white duck trousers confined with a blue sash, in which were thrust several dirks and a pistol.

"Here they come!" screamed Mrs. Brown, as she cowered behind one of the bales. "Nothing can help us now."

Then, noticing the firm aspect of Faith, who, in spite of her peril, wore a look of calm resolution, she endeavoured to nerve herself to the same degree of courage.

It was, however, in vain, although it was evident

that even in that dreadful hour she thought of her husband before herself.

"Heaven grant that nothing like this may befall him!" she muttered.

Then she clasped her hands, and with face upturned and her lips half parted offered up a prayer. Meanwhile the others, peering over the canvas bales, watched the boat as she came on.

"We have a floating fortress here," said Brenton; "and now, men, look well to your guns, and don't fire until I give the order."

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the low but firm response.

"And when you do fire be sure that you aim well," continued Brenton. "Let every one pick out his man."

"Ay, ay, sir!" The boat was dashing on, pulled by vigorous arms, towards the raft.

Soon it was within speaking distance, where the one who headed it made sign to his crew to stop pulling.

"May as well not try to fight me and men," he shouted, in broken English. "We got more guns, more men than you, and quick kill."

"That remains to be proved," returned Brenton. "True you have the advantage of numbers, but some of them must fall before you take us!"

"We quick see about it!" retorted the Malay; "pull ahead!" he added to his men.

The rowers bent to their work, and the boat came on, cleaving the waters like a knife.

"Had we not better fire now?" whispered the first mate to Brenton, when the boat was within twenty yards or so of the raft.

"No, not yet. We have no ammunition to waste," was the response. "Wait a few minutes longer and you will hear the order."

"But see," continued the mate, "they have stopped pulling and are all standing up, ready to fire upon us."

"Let them fire!" answered Brenton; "it will be so much the better, as they will only waste powder and shot."

Just as he spoke the Malay commander gave the order and the crack of the pistols was heard.

The whizz of the bullets then was heard, some of them lodging in the canvas bales and others passing over them.

"Had we not better fire now?" inquired the mate, somewhat impatiently, while every man grasped his musket firmly.

The Malays having reloaded again betook themselves to their oars and the boat continued to advance. "They will try to take us by assault," said Faith.

"Yes," answered Brenton, "they will not attempt to fire again until they board us."

On came the boat, but Brenton said not a word more until the craft was within about two fathoms of his "floating fortress."

"Now, men," he whispered, "take good aim and let each one kill his man when I give the order."

Instantly the barrels of the muskets were pointed across the canvas bales.

"Fire!" shouted Brenton.

The muskets were simultaneously discharged and every shot took effect, stretching six of the enemy dead and wounded in the boat.

"Pull! pull on!" cried the Malay leader, stamping up and down, either with anger or from the pain caused by a shot which had taken off one of the fingers of the left hand.

The Malays who had fallen incommenced the others, so that some time passed ere they were able to use their oars.

They pulled vigorously, the boat shooting straight for the raft.

"Load!" ordered Brenton; "lively, men, lively, and there may be a chance for another shot!"

The men, encouraged by their first success, had soon reloaded.

"Now then, ready!" added Brenton.

Again the boat was now scarcely a fathom distant, and those deadly musket barrels were pointed toward the foe.

"Fire!" was the order, and another half-dozen of the enemy fell.

Again were the carmen incommenced, but the boat having already received sufficient impetus, dashed on, and a minute later struck the raft.

With shouts, pistols and cutlasses drawn, the pirates now sprang on the raft. But there were the bales of cotton canvas in their way, and to get at their assailants they must climb over them.

"Back!" ordered the Malay leader. "We board 'em behind—on other side of raft."

The boat was again manned and directed to the other side of the raft.

Brenton had drawn his little force to that quarter, and now a desperate hand-to-hand conflict took place.

The pirates were two to one of their opponents, but the latter fought with such desperation as can only be shown by those in a similar situation.

As fast as a pirate put his foot on the raft he was either run through with a cutlass or knocked senseless with a clubbed musket.

This state of affairs, however, could not, of course, last long. The Malays, using their pistols, shot down all the men except Brenton and the chief mate. Upon the former several dark fellows pounced, and were about running him through with their cutlasses when Faith flung herself between them and her lover.

"Hold!" she screamed, in the Malay dialect. "Bolak does not want this man to be killed!"

The one who headed the boat had already slain the whaling mate with his cutlass, and he now rushed towards the spot where Faith was pleading for the young man's life.

"What's that?" he exclaimed.

Faith repeated what she had said.

"It is false!" he exclaimed. "I do not believe that Bolak gave any such order."

"You will be sorry if you do not obey him," said the young girl. "We spoke his craft yesterday, when he agreed, on condition of my becoming his wife, to let this man go free."

The Malay stood irresolute.

To disobey an order from Bolak must, he knew, be attended with speedy and sure death. Nevertheless he doubted the truth of Faith's assertion, believing it was merely a ruse to save the white man's life.

"Shall we kill?" inquired one of the Malay men, neither of whom had yet lowered his cutlass.

"Wait!" said the other.

He reflected several minutes, scowling meanwhile, and moving about restlessly with the pain from his severed finger.

Meanwhile the Malays, still with their blood-stained weapons raised, stood impatiently awaiting orders.

"Yes," continued Faith, "this man and the woman were not to be harmed."

"How happens it, then, that you are not with him if you consented to be his wife?" inquired the Malay leader, still speaking in his native tongue so that Brenton could not determine what was said, although he, of course, knew by the manner of Faith that she was pleading for his life.

"Our vessels were separated by the gale," responded the young girl.

"Well," said the Malay, "this matter must be looked into. We must take you aboard our craft, and keep you there until we can speak Bolak's vessel."

The men returned their cutlasses to their sheaths, and Brenton, with Faith and Mrs. Brown, were made to enter the boat.

This soon was pulled alongside the Malay craft, the captain of which scowled on seeing the three white prisoners.

"What means this?" he inquired. "Why did you not kill all—out them into a thousand pieces?"

The man explained, when the captain shrugged his shoulders, remarking that he did not believe the girl's story.

"However," he added, "take them below, and we will perhaps soon fall in with Bolak, when we can satisfy ourselves."

The three prisoners were conducted into the hold, a low, cramped place, smelling strongly of bilge water and deficient in air.

"What will they do with us?" inquired Mrs. Brown of Faith, when the latches had been fastened over them.

The conversation between Faith and the Malays having been carried on in the native tongue, she, like Brenton, was ignorant of most all that had been said.

The young girl soon explained.

"Then," said Mrs. Brown, "our fate is uncertain. They may fall in with Bolak at any moment, when your deception will be discovered."

"Yes; but let us hope that they will not find him until we have contrived some means to escape," answered Faith.

"It is all we can do under the circumstances," replied Mrs. Brown. "Oh, it was horrible," she added, shuddering, "to see those brave men all slain on the raft."

"Yes," said Brenton, "it was a sad sight, and I hope that these fiends may be paid for it."

"Hark!" said Faith, suddenly, as the sound of voices now was heard on deck.

She listened intently a moment.

"The fog is clearing," said she, "and they are talking about that other sail, which it seems is bearing straight toward them, and which is a sloop-of-war."

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown.

"Hush!" said Faith, holding up her finger, and again listening intently.

"Do you hear anything farther?" inquired Brenton.



"Yes; they are growing still more uneasy, and are crowding all sail to escape the sloop-of-war, which has shown the English flag."

Brenton uttered an exclamation of pleasure; but just then, glancing at Faith, he perceived that she was again listening intently, her face wearing an anxious expression.

"What now?" he inquired.

"They are bewailing their bad fortune," answered the young woman, "and say that, in case they are captured, they will make away with us three in spite of Bolak!"

"This is dreadful!" cried Mrs. Brown, wringing her hands; "I had hoped we should find an opportunity to escape."

"Judging by what they say on deck," continued Faith, "they will soon be overtaken, as the sloop-of-war is a fast sailer."

The trampling of feet with the shouting of voices on deck was now heard, indicating much confusion. "They are coming fast," said Faith, "and the Malays now have no hope of escaping them."

"Then it is all over with us!" wailed Mrs. Brown. "We must nerve ourselves to meet the worst," said Faith. "Even now they are talking of coming down here in a few minutes."

At that moment a dull report was heard in the distance, followed by the crash of a heavy shot as it struck one of the masts of the schooner.

The confusion on deck was evidently becoming greater every moment.

Soon the sound of heavy footsteps was heard, followed by the opening of the hatch.

A ladder then was thrust down into the hold, and three fierce fellows, each armed with pistol and cutlass, descended.

The foremost one was the captain.

"Must die now," he said, in broken English, to the prisoners. "Enemy coming, and shall not take you away."

"What means this?" cried Faith, indignantly; "how dare you disobey the orders of Bolak?"

"We never see Bolak more," answered the captain, with a grim smile.

"You are not sure of that. You may contrive to get away from your pursuers."

"No; once in white man's hands never get away," answered the captain. "But me and the crew will no fall into white man's hands."

"What do you mean?"

"Me mean that me intend to blow up schooner!" answered the Malay, with savage exultation. "But before me do it me must make sure quick kill white prisoners; for sometimes when blow up one or two escape."

With these words he turned to his followers and made a signal by raising his hand.

The head of each of the prisoners was thus covered by a pistol. Mrs. Brown shuddered and covered back, but Faith and Brenton sat resolute and firm, calmly awaiting the fate which it now seemed impossible to escape.

The fingers of the Malays were on the triggers of their weapons, and the captain seemed on the point of giving the command to fire, when the crash of another shot was heard, and down came the main yard, with the canvas attached, falling into the hold on the Malays, who endeavoured to extricate themselves. As to the captain, the end of the yard had struck him on the head, dashing out his brains, so that he now lay a sickening and ghastly object before his prisoners.

To snatch a cutlass and pistol from the hands of one of the Malays was with Brenton the work of a moment; then, striking down, by a well-directed blow on the head, one of the fellows, who had succeeded in extricating himself from the folds of the canvas, he said to Faith:

"Quick, now is our time, but we have not a moment to lose! We must spring directly overboard, and trust to finding a spar or something of that sort, which must be drifting about not far off, as the war vessel's shots have done fearful havoc."

"But Mrs. Brown?" said Faith. "What will become of her?"

"I will take care of you both," answered the young man. "You, I believe, can swim."

"Yes," answered Faith, "I can take care of myself while you help the captain's wife."

Brenton now seized Mrs. Brown by the arm.

Stifling her terror as well as she could, that lady followed Brenton and Faith up the ladder, the former telling her that she must spring overboard the moment they gained the deck.

All this was done much sooner than it has taken us to relate it.

Up the ladder rushed the trio and sprang overboard, hardly noticed by the Malays on deck, who were much confused by the last shot, which, besides doing the damage mentioned, had killed seven of their best men, among them the one at the wheel.

The moment the three were in the water Brenton directed Faith to strike out for the fragment of a spar floating about a ship's length distant, while he devoted himself to Mrs. Brown.

The latter, being unable to swim, from her fright caused Brenton much trouble.

At last, however, he succeeded in reaching the spar a moment after Faith had gained the same point.

Just as this was done a shout was heard from the Malays aboard, who now, partially recovered from their confusion, perceived the escaped prisoners.

One of the Malays, who, by this time, had extricated himself from the canvas, was seen pointing towards them, gesticulating wildly with his other arm.

In a moment half a dozen pistols were levelled towards the little party on the spar.

The report followed, and the bullets were seen skipping along the water beyond, having just escaped the heads of the three.

Another volley was fired, and one of these last shots, striking the spar near the top, passed through it, and, its force being thus spent, fell on Brenton's shoulder.

"We are beyond range now," said the young man, as the schooner dashed on her way.

"Yes; but perhaps they may lower a boat!" gasped Mrs. Brown.

"I doubt it," replied Brenton; "the sloop is too close to them now; they will hardly stop to lower."

Brenton, however, was mistaken. The schooner's yards and canvas having been shot away, she made slower progress under her foresail and staysail than could be done in a boat pulled by skilled rowers.

Accordingly, the captain's death having been the signal to forego the design of blowing up the schooner, the boats were lowered, and, manned by their dusky crews, were soon pulling away from the doomed vessel.

"They are going the other way, thank Heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown; "we shall not be molested."

"Yes, ma'am, you are right," repeated Brenton, "we shall not be molested."

The boats receded fast; but a shot from the sloop striking the hindmost one shattered it to pieces, at the same time killing and wounding several of the crew.

As their boat was struck the Malays uttered a wild shout; but those ahead did not stop to pick up their imperilled shipmates, who now were struggling in the water.

Brenton glanced towards the sloop-of-war, which now was less than a league distant.

Sitting across the spar, he waved a kerchief as a signal.

"They see us! they see us!" exclaimed Faith, who was intently watching the vessel, "and they are answering us with the flag!"

In fact this now was seen moving rapidly up and down.

"We will soon be picked up, then," cried Mrs. Brown, joyfully. "At last there is a chance of my husband and his men being taken off the island."

"Yes," answered Brenton; "and there she comes, heading this way."

The sloop-of-war had kept off a point, so as to get as near as possible to those on the spar.

On she came, one great mass of canvas from truck to deck, sweeping along with stately motion over the wide sea.

Soon she was near enough for the drifting whites to see her men, some of them stationed about the bows and others in the rigging.

She came yet nearer, then her mainyard was lowered.

It drew every moment nearer the castaways, who were picked up.

A frank-looking young sea-officer in the stern of the boat helped the women in.

"A bad situation for ladies," said he, looking at the spar.

"Yes," said Brenton, "but we have been in worse plights than that."

In a few words he then explained.

"You have had a narrow escape," said the young officer, "and I hope you may never be placed in such a situation again. Those Malays are the worst pests afloat."

"How did you know the schooner was a pirate?" inquired Brenton.

"We guessed at it, especially when we saw her crowding sail to get away."

The oarsmen were now ordered to pull ahead, and in a short time the trio were aboard.

Among those who came to see them from aft was a middle-aged officer from the East Indies, bound home to England.

This man looked intently at Faith, as if there was something about the young girl's appearance to remind him of some absent friend.

He watched her until, with Mrs. Brown, she was

conducted into the cabin, where she was kindly received by several ladies, among whom were the wives of two young officers, also bound home to England.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the elderly officer, already mentioned, touching Brenton on the shoulder, "but what is the name of that young woman who was with you picked up from the spar?"

"She is called Faith," answered the young man.

"Her other name, I believe, is Howard."

The man clapped a hand to his brow, and started back as if he had been shot.

"Nonsense," he at length said, recovering himself. "My imagination is running away with me, old as I am."

"Please explain yourself, sir," said Brenton, now much interested.

"Well, the truth is," said the officer, in a voice of strong emotion, "I once had a little daughter, whom I left at home while I went to join my regiment near Bombay. Until now I have found no opportunity to start away to revisit my native shores. A great sorrow, in fact, deprived me for a long time of the wish to do so. Years ago I was given up by our physician. I had contracted a malignant fever, and lay for days on the brink of the grave. I had sent home for my little daughter, wishing to see her once more before I expired, and in due time I received a letter from her guardian, stating she was on her way."

"This was indeed cheering news to me, and I think it had something to do with effecting my cure. At all events, from that moment I became better, until gradually I fully recovered my health. Weeks and months passed, but the vessel containing my little girl came not. A gloomy foreboding seized me, and I could scarcely sleep at night for the effect it had on my spirits."

"When at last a whole year had passed I sent a message home to a friend to make inquiries about the vessel aboard which my daughter had embarked. He did so, and at last his letter came, containing the dreadful information that the vessel about which I inquired had never been heard of after she passed round the Cape of Good Hope."

"That the craft had been wrecked or foundered I had not the slightest doubt, and concluded that my child had perished with the rest. Words cannot express my anguish; but I was obliged to control my feelings, which I at last succeeded in doing by a close attention to my duties."

"At last, here I am on my way back to Old England, and who do I see now but the face of one who powerfully reminds me of my child, although she was almost a babe when I left her? Her name, too, the same as mine, which is Howard—"

"Your doubts may be set at rest at once," interrupted Brenton. "Faith is your daughter. I know this from having heard her story as well as yours."

"I must go to her, then," cried the colonel, vainly endeavouring to control his excitement. "I must go to my child."

But ere he could reach the cabin Faith, much improved by alterations in her toilet, which, thanks to the kindness of the officers' wives, she had been enabled to make, emerged on deck.

Seeing the colonel advancing towards her with outstretched arms, she drew back.

"My child! my own daughter!" exclaimed the colonel.

"It is true," said Brenton; "he is your father. I have heard his story. He recovered from his illness in India soon after he heard the news of your coming out to him."

"To set all doubts at rest," said the colonel, "if you roll up the sleeve of your right arm you will find, just above the elbows, the mark of a leaf, a birth-mark."

"It is there," answered Faith. "I have often noticed it. My father, my own dear father!"

The next moment they were locked in each other's arms.

With much emotion Brenton stood a spectator of this scene.

When the first transport of the meeting were over the colonel turned to the young sailor.

"You and my child seem acquainted."

"Yes," answered the other, and he soon explained.

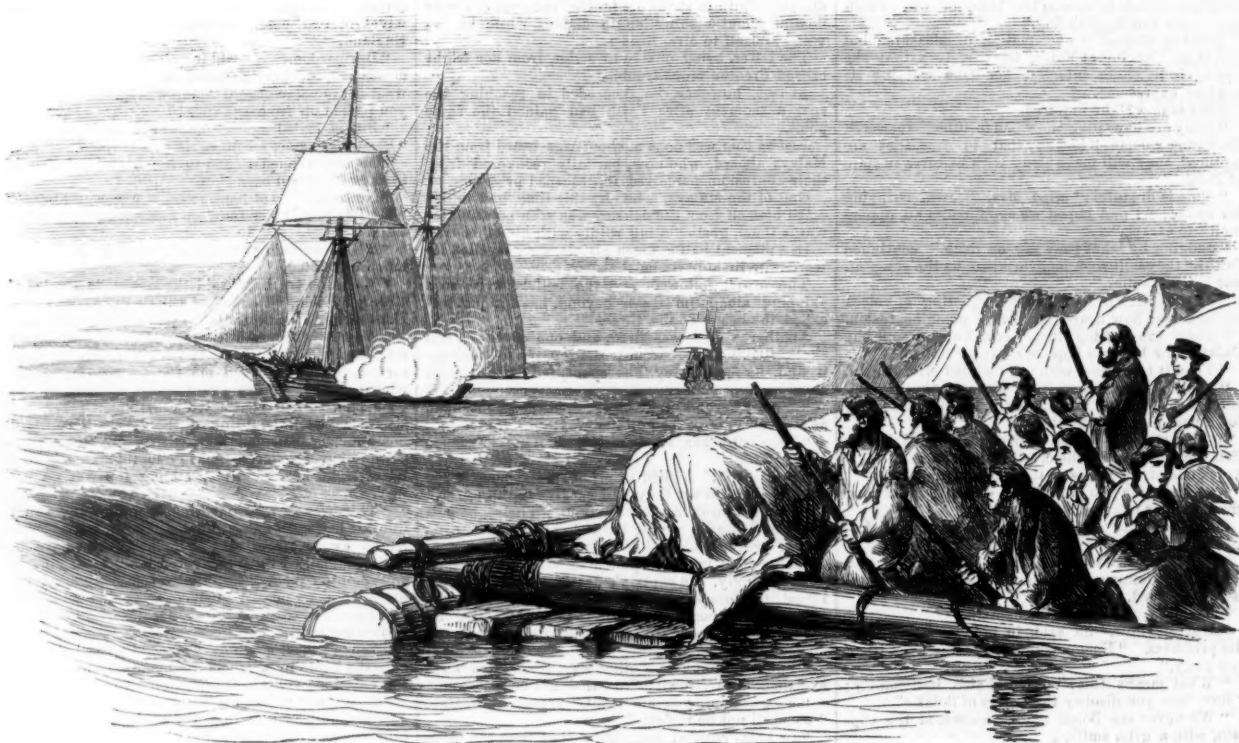
"But for your child, to whom I feel deeply grateful," added the young man, "I would not now be alive to tell you this story, by which you will perceive that she has saved my life several times."

"Yes," said Faith, blushing, "and you have saved mine. Oh, father," she added, "you cannot imagine how good, how nobly he has behaved. And—"

"Enough!" interrupted Colonel Howard, smiling.

"I perceive I have found my daughter only to lose her again. You love this young man," he added; "is it not so?"

"Yes, father, I do," she answered, her hand gliding



## [A HOPELESS DEFENCE.]

into that of Brenton, who stood near. "Indeed, I cannot help it."

"Well, I am sure I have no fault to find with you for it," answered her father. "He is a worthy young man, and I have no doubt he has earned you."

"Thank you, sir," said Brenton, grasping the colonel's hand. "And it shall be my task for ever to show that I deserve her."

"Spoken like a man," said the colonel. "Fortunately," he added, "there is a chaplain aboard who will soon manage matters to our satisfaction."

Brenton looked at him inquiringly, not sure he understood him rightly. But the colonel soon set all his doubts at rest by adding:

"Yes, he can give away my child to your keeping!"

"Oh, father, what! aboard ship!" cried Faith, blushing.

"Yes, why not? For a young sea amazon like yourself," he added, "it is the most fitting place."

Faith made no objection. In fact, the glitter of her eyes and the bright colour on her cheek showed that she was pleased with the arrangement.

The ship now was gliding along after the fugitive Malays. They were making good headway, but the war-vessel made better, and, therefore, in a short time the pirates were overhauled.

They were taken aboard, and, having been ironed and handcuffed, were thrust into the hold.

Mrs. Brown now went to the captain of the sloop.

"Will you stop at the island where my husband is, and take him and his men aboard?"

The captain, who had been made acquainted with her story, bowed and answered:

"We are in a great hurry, madam, as we have fair winds, and would like to take advantage of them, but I will stop at the island."

"Thank you. Oh, thank you!" answered the happy wife, deeply grateful.

Brenton had preserved the paper upon which he had put down the bearings of the island.

Hearing Mrs. Brown's question, he at once stepped up to the captain and showed him the notes he had made.

"Why, this is indeed fortunate," said the captain. "The island lies right in our track. I hope, Mrs. Brown, that your husband has not been taken off by any other craft."

"I did not think of that," cried the anxious wife, turning pale. "Perhaps he has fallen into the hands of the Malays."

"Let us hope for the best," said the captain.

"At any rate we will know in a couple of days."

With what anxiety did the captain's wife watch the men at the masthead, hour after hour, bending her head now and then, hoping to hear the well-known cry of "Land, oh!"

Two days had passed, then that welcome cry was heard. It went straight to the heart of the good woman, who, in her excitement, leaned against the rail for support.

Brenton, seizing a glass, went aloft.

"The moment you see a—see his signal," gasped Mrs. Brown to the young man, "pray let me know."

"I will not fail to do so," answered Brenton; and then, pale with excitement, the poor woman stood, her gaze fixed upon the form of Brenton, as he leaned from the mast, levelling his glass toward the distant isle.

Minutes—hours passed; still the welcome cry came not from aloft.

"I am afraid he has met with some misfortune," gasped Mrs. Brown, unable to suppress the rising tears.

"Fear not," said Faith, encouragingly; "we are hardly near enough yet for a signal to be seen from the ship."

The ship dashed on, but the woman listened and watched in vain.

At last the vessel was near enough for a signal to be visible, if there should be any on the island. But none was seen, and the heart of the captain's wife misgave her.

"Aloft, there! nothing yet?" inquired the commander of the sloop.

"No, sir," answered the man whom he hailed.

"It looks strange," said the captain, exchanging glances with his lieutenant; "it cannot be that any mistake has been made about the island; this must be the one we are in search of."

"Yes," said Faith, toward whom the captain had also glanced inquiringly, "this is the island. Brenton is a good navigator, and could not have made a mistake."

All gazed toward the shores of the island, but they saw no sign of a human being.

"Gone!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "I am afraid the Malays have had a hand in this."

"I am more inclined to think that your husband and his men have been picked up by some other vessel," answered the captain. "He may be homeward bound now, and we may reach England nearly at the same time."

"May Heaven grant that it is so!" exclaimed the anxious wife.

The ship now was within half a mile of the island, and the captain deemed it dangerous to venture

nearer. Therefore he tacked, and, leaving his lieutenant in charge of the craft, lowered a boat and was soon pulled ashore.

A search was made in all directions, but no sign of the missing party could be discovered.

"It is very strange," said the captain. "I should think that we would at least come upon some relic of those men."

They searched longer, but without success. Then they returned aboard, where the missing man's wife stood heavy-hearted enough. When she heard that no sign of her husband had been found she had great difficulty to save herself from falling. Her extreme excitement sent the blood rushing to her head, and for a moment everything seemed to grow dark before her.

The vessel was again put upon her course, running along the east shore of the island, and passing several promontories protruding therefrom.

Just as she passed the last one a cry was heard from the man at the masthead.

"On deck there!"

"Well?" queried the officer of the deck.

"A signal on a pole, sir, in shore!"

The welcome words went to the heart of the captain's wife like an electric shock.

She rushed to the rail, and, glancing shoreward, beheld, sure enough, a white cloth waving on a tall staff.

"It is he—my husband; thank Heaven!" exclaimed the poor woman, in an ecstasy of joy.

The sloop's main yard was at once hauled aback, and a boat was lowered.

An hour after it had gained the shore it was seen returning, loaded with human freight, and Mrs. Brown already imagined she could see the form of her husband.

At last the boat was alongside, and the next moment the happy wife was clasped in her husband's arms.

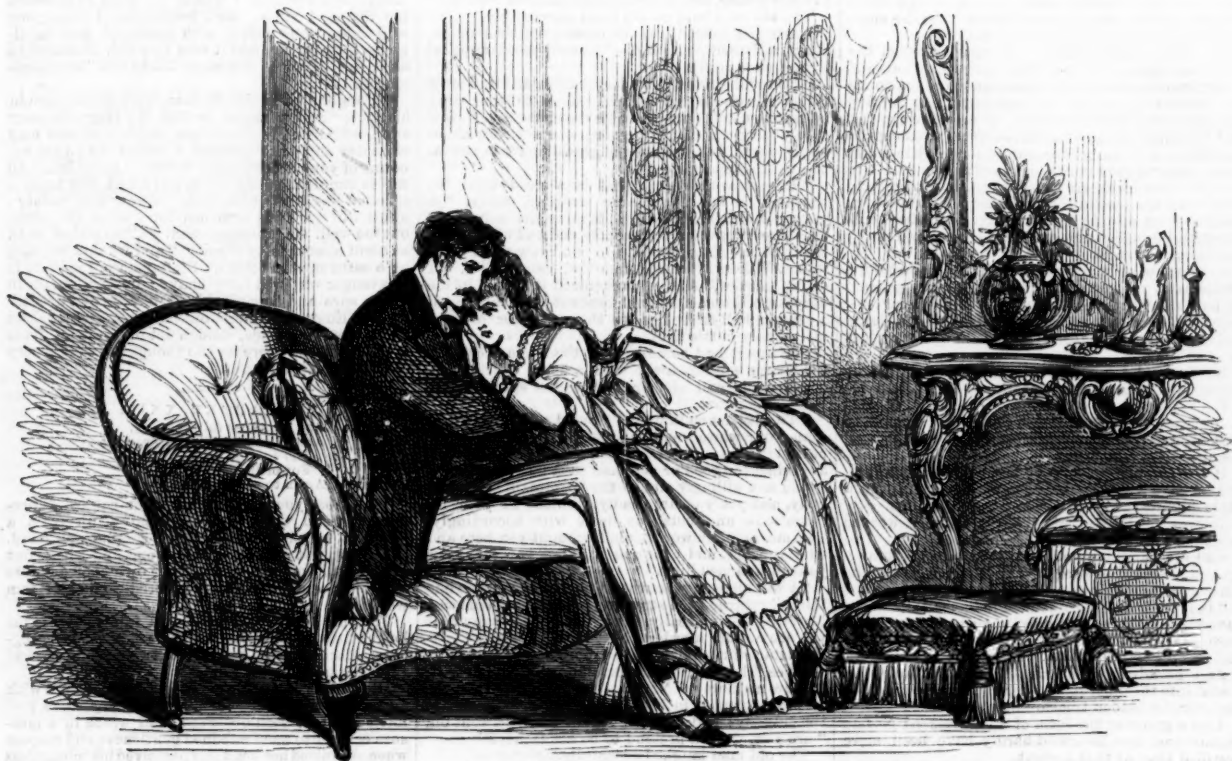
There is little to add.

A few days after Faith Howard and Brenton were made man and wife aboard the sloop-of-war, which in due time safely reached her destination in Old England.

The Malays were then punished as they deserved. Mrs. Brenton and her husband resided with her father, the colonel, as happy a trio as one would wish to see. The young man obtained command of a fine vessel in the East India trade, and eventually made his fortune, when he retired from sea-life to be "moored" for evermore alongside his beautiful consort.

THE END.





[WARMING A SERPENT.]

## THE FOOT TICKLER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Evelyn's Plot," "Darcy's Child," "One Sparkle of Gold," &c., &c.*

## CHAPTER XXI.

He asked no question; all were answered now by the first glance on that still marble brow. It was enough—she died! What recked it how? The love of youth, the hope of better years was reft at once, and he deserved his fate.

ALL Naples was in dismay. The idol of the dilettanti, the admired beauty of those few saloons which she had honoured with her presence was gone—gone to an unknown and mysterious tomb. For no one doubted that she was dead; no one even imagined the possibility of Norma d'Albano being still in life.

The manager of the opera, the physicians, Eustace Villiers, and her scared attendants were all of the same belief, and though Juana was unaccountably absent from the scene it was supposed that she was too completely in despair as to her lady's abduction to venture to encounter the popular rage and animosity against such carelessness in the discharge of her duty.

"Pray, Mr. Villiers, what is your judgment in the mysterious affair?" asked the official who sat with solemn and yet sadly impotent wisdom in deliberation on the case. "You saw the young lady in her last hours, and must have some opinion on the subject."

Eustace shrugged his shoulders mournfully, and gave a glance more eloquent than words.

"It is impossible to say," he returned. "Where there are beauty and gifts like those of the lamented signorina there are a thousand dangers from jealous rivals and disappointed admirers. Need I suggest to one so experienced as yourself the possibility of poison—"

"But, my good signor," said the Italian, "surely that does not account for the disappearance of the body and of the maid."

"Pardon me. But it is surely quite consistent," returned Eustace. "We will suppose for the sake of argument that there had been some foul play, though it is, of course, not at all ascertained that it was so. Well, in that case there would, under such active superintendence as yours, have been a *post-mortem* inquiry and examination of the remains. What then?" he added, with a significant gesture. "There would have been a disclosure of the nature of the means used for the deed, and consequently the criminal might have been discovered. That is my solution of the mystery. It is certainly not at all probable that the Signorina Norma should have

been either able or willing to take such an extraordinary step herself."

The inspector was silent for a few minutes as if reflecting on the ideas presented.

"Signor," he said, at length, "you should have been one of us. Your faculty of tracing probable causes for events is remarkable, and quite thrown away in your position. But what would you suggest as the best thing to be done under such very exceptional circumstances?"

"It is a most knotty point, and you do me honour by asking my poor opinion on the subject," returned Eustace, blandly. "Certainly, were I to suggest any immediate action it would be to keep a watch on all places of interment about the city, and also to make every exertion to discover the missing maid, who cannot be out of Naples, in my opinion; and, of course, a general inspection of every suspected person who was in the habit of frequenting the signorina's rooms or the opera-house might be useful till some farther clue is obtained. I myself should be too thankful to add my own poor exertions to the rest, were it possible, but I am compelled to leave Naples in a short time. Perhaps," he added, anxiously, "we might get some clue meanwhile, or else you could communicate with me if any be obtained."

Had it been possible for suspicion to rest on the remarkable man who thus exerted that strange power over all with whom he came in contact such words would have utterly banished it, and, indeed, the haggard look, the gloomy eyes, the general distress of the whole mien, could but speak one tale.

The reports that had been whispered of his being the favoured admirer of the prima donna seemed but too verified by the effect on him of her death, and the chief of the police, who was tolerably well versed in reading expression and manner, at once dismissed every shadow of such passing doubts.

There was a little more conversation of the same kind, there were promises on both sides, and an appointment for future interviews on the engrossing subject, and then Eustace took his leave of the officials and returned to his abode.

He shut himself in his apartment and looked every mode of ingress ere he ventured to indulge the expression of his thoughts even in an unrestrained play of feature.

But when he at last cast himself in a chair and sank into a deep and gloomy reverie there were evident doubt and anxiety in his bold and daring mind.

"Am I to be foiled, or is it a stroke of fortune in my favour?" he said, musingly. "It is written that there are those whom it is death to cross in their plans or purposes, or to hinder in their advance-

ment—and Eustace Villiers is one of those. Yes, the star of my destiny is bright and clear so long as I do not pause or hesitate in my career. Let me see," he added, after a pause, "how the magic of fate works in its charmed seal."

He drew from his dress a ring with one large stone set with smaller brilliants, and held it up to the light.

As he did so his countenance changed and a shade of anxiety came on his usually impassive features.

"Ah," he said, "it is green to-night; that is a bad omen, and yet not the worst. It does but imply the presence of some shadowing danger that only needs caution and bravery to chase it away. There is but a friendly warning, not a dark omen in that shade. No, I am but to accept it as such, my kind guardian. Only whence is it?" he murmured, in a lower and more awe-stricken tone. "Is it from the dead or the living, the past or present? I must think and arrange my plans, and then away with doubts and fears."

And he sank into a long reverie that was at length broken by the clang of bells announcing the evening vespers and summoning him to an engagement that he could not break without exciting suspicion and remark.

Yet he looked months if not years older when he emerged from that brief seclusion, and his manner during the remainder of the evening had something forced and constrained in its gaiety.

For once the mask was worn without the usual ease and consummate art.

It was the third day after this conversation and the plans of the bridegroom were completed for quitting Naples.

All had been arranged, the claims paid, the servants whom he had temporarily employed were discharged, and he lacked only one more brief visit to the house he had frequented so fatally for the full conclusion of his memorable stay in the beautiful city.

It was perhaps rather a risk to encounter. It implied a peculiar interest in the fair, unhappy creature who had tenanted the apartments of which he was about to take a farewell.

But still it was also perhaps rather a proof of utter innocence to venture thither after all that had taken place, and, what was more, Eustace Villiers had a powerful motive to dare the danger.

In any case, and from whatever cause, he decided on the step for that last night in Naples, and when the evening drew in, and the majority of the inhabitants of the city were enjoying either the sweet air of the bay or less innocent diversions in the various places of amusement in the city, he threw

on the large wrap, which was at once light in texture and a complete envelope—so to speak—of his whole person and features, and took his way to the mansion where Norma d'Albano had resided.

He entered the wide portal, and ascended the broad marble staircase which led to the luxurious and richly furnished suite of rooms that the prima donna had inhabited, and which were not likely to find another owner for some brief space. The expense and the associations of such rooms were enough to keep them untenanted for many a long day in a city where superstition is rife and wealth scant.

So Eustace fearlessly ascended to the landing and drew from his pocket the duplicate pass key which had so often admitted him to the beautiful girl's presence, but which now only gave entrance to empty and deserted rooms.

At least so he imagined in his inmost heart must be the case, and he advanced without turning round to look at objects that all carried with them some painful association to any spirit which had once loved and admired that beautiful and gifted girl now lost to them for ever.

He lingered for a few minutes, however, ere he proceeded to execute the purpose of his visit.

He sat down in one of the cunningly devised chairs, and ere he proceeded farther he seemed to gaze around for some object that evidently engaged his undivided attention.

It was, however, not to be immediately perceived, and he gave a slight start of impatience, and even a little suppressed exclamation escaped his lips.

It was missing—that small, gracefully worked cabinet which he sought.

And with an impatient, angry gesture he sprang up and hastened towards the door which led to the inner apartments.

"Is it possible?" he muttered to himself; "can she have hidden it or any robes have been here to remove that precious casket? Any way I shall soon find out the mystery."

And he advanced hastily through the half-open portal into the inner room where he fancied he might discover the hidden treasure he sought.

Had a ghost or the form of the deceased Norma encountered him, he could hardly have been more petrified than at that instant.

There was an inhabitant of the room in which he entered, one whose form and figure at once created attention and commanded reverence.

It was an old man, his air and beard white with age, and his features furrowed with the lines imprinted by time. Yet his figure was hale, his eyes undimmed, and his complexion still ruddy with the hue of health.

If the footprints of years were marked on his visage they had spared his vigour and the intellect and energy which shone through every feature and movement.

Eustace involuntarily recoiled from the searching glances of that dignified, calm face.

But it was scarcely in his nature to even recognize opposition or fear, and the next instant he assumed the defiant air that was far more habitual to him.

"How is this, old man?" he said, haughtily; "by what right are you here? Beware lest I commit you at once for a thief and robber in another's domain."

There was a sharp sarcasm in the slight, scornful smile that repaid the speech.

"I might return the inquiry, only it is superfluous," was the rejoinder. "I need neither to ask your identity nor your excuses, Eustace Villiers."

"Then you will perhaps prove your wonderful knowledge as to my excuses," said the young man, bitterly. "As to my identity, there is nothing very remarkable in your knowing who I am. Half Naples, if not more, is perfectly acquainted with my name and identity."

"With your name probably. As to the rest it may be matter of doubt," replied the old man. "But I can satisfy you of my insight into both in a very few words. Have you never happened to read or hear in Holy Writ the sentence 'Hast thou killed and taken possession,' and comprehended the fate that befell the person to whom they were addressed?"

Eustace sprang forward with a bound, but he was arrested by a strong hand laid on his arm, and a firm though mature and mellowed voice in his ears.

"Be warned, young man. I am not so foolish as to venture hither unprotected and unwatched. If I do not appear within a certain time there are those who will give instant information—ay, and know every living creature that entered these doors during the interval. You will be lost if you dare to injure me—yes, lost beyond even your unhelpful power to save yourself from ruin."

The young man seated himself gloomily on a neighbouring chair as if that had been the object of his sudden rush.

"You are an idiot to suppose I want to harm you," he said, soothingly, "but you are trespassing in rooms that do not in any way belong to you, and are far more in danger than I am, who, in a measure,

have a right to be here from my long friendship with the late owner, the unfortunate Signorina Norma."

The old man held up his hand menacingly.

"Are you indeed able to pronounce that name, Eustace Villiers," he said—"the supposed appellation of your victim?"

"You will drive me to desperation and induce a violence I would not willingly show to your gray hairs, old man," interrupted Eustace, angrily. "How dare you speak of the signorina in such terms, or imply that I had the very slightest share in her lamented disappearance?"

"Disappearance—yes, that is a mild term for the terrible deed," said the stranger, coolly. "A young, beautiful, gifted and famous girl is brought to a premature and melancholy end and we are told that she has disappeared! Do you know what I call it, Mr. Villiers?" he said, in a low, hoarse voice. "I call it murder," and he pronounced the word in the very ear of his companion like the strong whizzing of a cannon ball that flies by the spectator of some melancholy battle field.

Perhaps it had something of the same effect, for the hearer sprang away with a fierce effort of the whole frame and stood regarding the speaker with threatening gaze.

"This is past endurance," he said, at length. "Old man, your white hairs will not protect you if you persist in such insults. Speak out, if you would say anything, for good or evil, and then go unharmed. I would not willingly add to the horrors of the tragedy, and yet you are madly insolent in your insinuations, and must be dealt with accordingly. Tell me, in plain words, what brought you here and who you are, and I for one will not harm you for your insane meddling."

"I will answer you when you have told me one thing," returned the stranger. "Can you tell me who Norma d'Albano really was? Dare you swear that you are not her murderer?"

Eustace turned livid with suppressed rage.

"Yes," he said, "insolent slanderer, I do aver it, I know no more of Norma d'Albano's fate than the vilest stranger in Naples who is gossiping as to the tragedy; and as to her real origin," he went on, "are you, do you pretend to be her father?"

The old man laughed scornfully.

"Do I with my white hairs look like the father of a young and lovely girl like that unhappy one? No, nor am I what would be more probable, her grandfather. But I am in more senses than one," he added, significantly, "her executor. Now do you understand, Mr. Villiers? And I by that power must call in question not only her death—poor unhappy one—but all that has succeeded her death. There are valuables missing, and even this day you sought perhaps the most precious relic of all—the repository of her most prized treasures. It is gone—yes, gone beyond recovery, Mr. Villiers, and if you are wise you will abandon all search after the casket, on condition that I do not institute an inquiry into the disappearance of its mistress."

"These are idle, unproved words," said Eustace, scornfully. "I have a right to demand more definite explanation, if you venture to accuse me or to claim any power," he went on, rather confusedly.

"Perhaps you are right," returned the old man, "perhaps as the reputed husband of Norma d'Albano, you ought to have a chance of vindicating yourself from the foul crime of which you are accused. Eustace Villiers, dare you pretend ignorance of her fate, even as you are ignorant of her birth and origin?" he asked, solemnly.

"Her birth!—again that hint, old man," exclaimed Eustace, eagerly; "then who—what was she?"

"It matters not. I ask you where she is," said the old man; "answer me that, false and perjured that you are."

"I know not, on my faith—my honour," returned Eustace, earnestly.

"On your faith—your honour!" repeated the old man, bitterly; "such things do not exist, and therefore can be no pledge for your valueless word. But be it so. I will accept your assurance on condition that you do not attempt any further spoliation of the treasures left behind by the murdered Norma; they will revert to more worthy hands. You have already robbed them sufficiently, leave the rest in peace, or you will have such an investigation instituted into the circumstances of Norma's death as will cover you with shame and punishment. Nay, frown not on me, young man; I fear you not, with all your boasted and unscrupulous powers. My life is scarcely of value, save for others, and it is safe even from your plottings."

He was indeed a bold man, with his white hairs and furrowed cheeks, thus to provoke the revenge of one before whom none had yet even ventured to stand.

But, either from conscious guilt or some secret influence on his unscrupulous will, the words were received in gloomy and sullen silence.

"As to that," he said, at length, "I am just about to quit Naples in all probability for ever, and there-

fore there need be little more question as to these miserable keepsakes. I wished certainly to preserve the diamond suite. But, remember, I treat your wild accusations simply with contempt and indulgence for your age and it may be grief. For aught I know the Signorina Norma is still in life," he added, scornfully.

"Possibly," said the old man, with great scorn in his tone, "and it might be that Sir Hugh Delancy and Lord Grantley Neville are in life also, and may some day appear to demand a rather awkward account of your proceedings. Pahaw!" he added, "all this is simple insanity which you affect, like many a criminal has done before you, for your own safety; but it will not avail with me, for I know the truth but too well. Go, unhappy man, go," he added, with an air of almost lofty dignity, "and let this warning be a safeguard to others. Sin no more, for there is an avenger who will tarry maybe, but will strike in time a sure and terrible blow for your evil deeds."

And Eustace Villiers obeyed that stern behest and retired in silence, though not in penitence, from the apartment, where he had thought to work a very different and safe result.

## CHAPTER XXII.

And are those folkies going,  
And is my proud heart growing  
Too cold or wise  
For brilliant eyes  
Again to set it glowing?

"CARLOS, you are here for your reward, I presume?" said Celia Vyvian, looking up from a book, on which her eyes if not her mind was fixed. "Name it. It shall be a liberal one, and I have but delayed till you could fix on your own choice before my power should be at all fettered to do as I fain would."

The youth had stood before his fair mistress far longer than she imagined as she sat in the morning-room where he, with but one or two exceptions, had the sole right of admission.

His dark eyes had devoured her every feature with an eagerness which she might scarcely have permitted had he been observed, and which in a measure calmed to more subdued gentleness and respect when she raised her head and perceived his motionless and silent figure.

"Did I hear aright? Do you intend to leave the Rookery to go to London, and for the purpose you imply?" he asked, with a sort of choking in his utterance that made it slow and difficult.

"Why not? What should stand in the way of such a plan, Carlos?" she said, half in surprise, and half in amusement at the youth's extraordinary manner.

"I would if I could," he replied, in the same tone.

"You, Carlos? Are you mad that you forget yourself so strangely?" she said, with a haughtiness she seldom used to the favoured page.

"Lady, do not you forget?" he said, softly, and yet in a thrilling whisper that brought her to the memory of what she did in truth owe in deference if not in gratitude. "You bid me name a boon just now. Surely I may claim that of free and faithful speech, where my devotion has been so proved in deeds."

"Yes, yes, only even you must not outstep certain bounds," she replied, with some hesitation, "and you are venturing on a most delicate and strange subject when you presume to touch on my movements—and my marriage, Carlos."

"Your marriage? I would die rather than see it," the youth exclaimed, passionately.

She started back with a crimson flush.

"Carlos!" she began, angrily.

But he was kneeling at her feet ere she had time to continue the sentence.

"Forgive me, lady, but you cannot but know in your inmost heart that it is hateful, unworthy of you to marry him. He is ungrateful, cold, selfish. I could murder him when I see him thus and think that you would give him your hand," he cried, impetuously. "He loves you not, and yet you would wed him, and it maddens me."

The words cut terribly deep.

Celia knew but too well their truth, and yet she had not dreamed it was visible to others, and an angry crimson spot and scornful flash of her eyes spoke the passion which was working within, and which yet she had not liberty or courage to vent on the youth in whose power she had placed herself so recklessly.

"Listen—listen, lady," he went on, impetuously. "You know full well what I would do to serve your slightest wish, to save you one penny, or to bring one joy to your heart. But if you believe it, if you do indeed think you owe me aught, then grant me one boon. I had rather take it as a favour than demand it as a right," he went on, significantly. "Postpone this marriage. I cannot endure to see it. Let it wait," he added, imperiously.

"Carlos, it is impossible. All is arranged. We are to leave here in a week, and then the necessary pre-



perations will take a month or perhaps two. Then it must take place. What difference can it make to you?" she added, more softly. "You will still remain in my service as my favoured page, you will belong to me exclusively without reference to Mr. Mordant. It is a mere causeless and idle fancy, Carlos."

"No, I cannot endure it—you will be his, and that will drive me mad," said the youth, doggedly.

"But that is simple presumption—madness," she said, in actual embarrassment before her own darling domestic. "You go too far; you should not speak such wild words, though I believe—I hope you do not comprehend their meaning."

"I do—I do," he exclaimed. "They mean that I am your very slave—that I only live in the light of your eyes, the smile from your lips, and I cannot endure you should bestow one such look on him, one caress, one word of love."

Celia was literally speechless. The risk in which she stood was too terrible to be dared thoughtlessly, and yet such upstart presumption fevered her blood to boiling heat.

"But you knew of this betrothal, Carlos, it is no fresh idea to you," she argued, gently. "Your own noble deed was to save me from a peril into which you would plunge me by your own reckless folly," she went on, impetuously. "Be rational, and fling such wild fancies to the winds. There is no favour you can ask that I would not grant in return for your noble service, only—"

"None, lady—none," he said, sneeringly, "none save this postponement of the bridal that will be your misery. Is that what you would say?"

"Yes," she said, hastily. "I am grateful—most grateful, and he I know is what you say."

"Yet you love him—you love him!" he cried, sharply.

"Perhaps not," she whispered. "There are other reasons for marriage besides love, Carlos. There may be expediency, revenge and safety. Can you not comprehend that?"

"Perhaps," he answered. "That might change much—much if you pledge your word for the rest, that I shall ask no other boon in vain."

"Yes, yes," she said. "I promise, Carlos. What can you wish more from the most grateful mistress?"

"But you will put it off, you will put it off, will you not?" she said, eagerly. "I mean so long as it is possible? There are so many ways to delay, and, if you love him not—"

"Hush, Carlos, hush!" she said, firmly; "this is passing your promised limits. Let me hear no more of such wild absurdities, and you shall be amply rewarded for the obedience to my wishes. Carlos, I believed I could trust you, that you were my friend amidst so many enemies," she added, suddenly changing her tone.

"Yes, yes, I am, I will be—forgive, forgive!" he exclaimed, as he saw the tears suddenly glisten in her beautiful eyes. "You can but fear from my devotion, not my treachery, lady," he added. "You can sway me like a very child by one gentle word or look."

"Then leave me now, Carlos," she said, "and send Laura to me. It is time I dressed for my drive, and it is strange she has not come to remind me of the hour."

Carlos touched the slender fingers with his lips, and Celia dared not resent the liberty save by a quick withdrawal from his grasp.

Then he hastened from the room, and she resumed her original position, gazing on the paper she held in her hand, perhaps to cover her real abstraction, perhaps to try to divert her thoughts from the irritation that had seized on her restless, troubled mind.

Her eyes wandered listlessly over the columns till she seemed about to throw the sheet down in disgust, when suddenly a name caught her eyes in the brief paragraph among the smaller notices in the column that brought the blood to her cheek and an earnest, doubtful expression to her dark and expressive eyes.

It was indeed a perplexing question that she had to resolve.

And there was but a brief space for consideration since the appearance of her maid was the signal for her toilet to be begun, and the hour of her drive would bring Victor Mordant to his daily visit and the sharing of her afternoon drive.

Seldom even when preparing for a ball where she would outshine all others had the heiress been so difficult to please as on the choice of that simple every-day dress.

But when it was finished it would have been difficult to have suggested one improvement that would have added to its perfect taste and elegance. The soft, subdued colours that she chose toned down the somewhat too brilliant character of her beauty; the chaste severity of the coiffure she selected gave a passive thoughtfulness to her naturally haughty, imperious expression.

And when Laura opened the door for her to pass

from the room the maid was fairly perplexed with the remarkable change in her lady's whole appearance.

"Well, she's not like the same creature," was the countess's reflection. "It's astonishing what dress does. Why, she does know better than I do, I must confess, how to suit her style as she likes best. One would think she'd been brought up to it, but then, dear me, it comes, like the small-pox, natural to some people."

And Laura returned to the task of arranging the deserted apartment.

Meanwhile the same ideas in a different form were passing through Victor Mordant's mind as he saw the change in the young hostess of the Bookery.

Celia was unusually thoughtful during the meal, gentle and passive and abstracted as it appeared to her watchful cousin, though he made no remark during the presence of the domestics in the saloon. But when the last of them disappeared, and the cousins passed into the adjoining library till the carriage should be announced, he could no longer abstain from asking the question that had long trembled on his tongue.

"Celia, dear cousin, are you ill, or has something disquieted you this morning? There is a change which you cannot conceal," he went on, as she seemed to turn away from his inquiring gaze.

She did not reply for a moment.

There were a look and gesture as if she was striving to gain strength for the task before her. Then she suddenly turned, and raised her fine dark eyes to his.

"Victor," she said, "you are right. There is a sad struggle going on in my poor, weak heart. But I believe I have conquered at last. Have you seen the papers lately, Victor?" she went on. "There was an announcement that you might perhaps be interested in knowing, that might change your life, and," she added, in a low, sad tone, "mine."

Victor flushed painfully.

"No, Celia, no; but perhaps I could guess. Is she—Irene—married?"

It was a sharp pang for that jealous nature to endure to see how her rival was ever present in her lover's mind.

But her resolution had been taken, and she went on bravely and calmly.

"No, Victor, not so, or perhaps my suffering and my weakness need not have been so betrayed. Irene is still, so far as I know, free—nay, freer than ever, for her father, Sir Hugh, died long weeks since. It is this I have to tell you, Victor, and to ask you whether you desire your freedom, whether you wish to break the ties that bind you to me, and leave you at liberty to try once more your fate with your old love. Victor, even though it might break my heart, I would not have you sacrifice yourself against your will."

Her voice trembled visibly, and there were tears in her large eyes which spoke more powerfully than words the emotion that she desired to express.

Victor turned away for a few minutes and paced the room with hurried and uneven strides.

Celia could perceive by the quick glances which she from time to time gave that his features were working with uncontrollable agitation, and that a fearful struggle was going on within. It was no bad test of her own firmness that she could so far control her impatience as to remain without betraying by word or sign the agony of suspense which that interval cost her. It was a sharp if brief punishment, for it revealed more unmistakably than words how completely Irene still reigned queen of Victor Mordant's heart, even though he had such cause to believe her unworthy of his affection.

Perhaps it was not more than five minutes, perhaps not even that brief space of time, ere Victor paused in that "quarter-deck walk," which seemed to vent his fevered irritation. But to Celia it seemed as many hours, like the surgeon's knife lengthens minutes into hours for the suffering patient.

And when at last he sat down by her, and took her hand in his, it was cold as ice in his clasp.

"My noble Celia," he said, "how little do I deserve this love at your hands, that should make my wayward self an object of such painful interest. My dear one—my own," he added, passing his arm round her with gentle tenderness that had something of respect in its reticence—"forgive me if I could waver for an instant in my decision," he added, more calmly. "But if it was so—if I could even permit myself for a brief instant to recall the past—if the image of one who is now for ever banished from my heart and thoughts did rise up before me, it has been but to make yours more bright, more precious. Celia, you know how I loved her, you know all the agony her treachery caused me, and you, in your noble unselfishness, have given me the liberty to attempt once more to seek the happiness I had dreamed of with her as my bride. But I could not—I will not accept it. I am yours for life, Celia, doubly bound to you from this fresh proof of your noble nature, so different to hers," he went on, hurriedly, as if to school himself in the belief he spoke

and pledge his honour to what he knew was his inevitable fate.

Celia drew back still from his embrace with a look of mournful sympathy.

"My poor Victor, it is hard for you, and perhaps for me, that you should only marry because you despair of happiness with her you really love. Think again, for our fate turns in the balance. Are you sure you can, that you do prefer your unworthy cousin to all others, that you choose me from the world as your wife? Victor, I ask it for the last time. There should be no doubt or hesitation in your reply."

"From the whole world!" he repeated. "Yes, Celia, you are right. From this time there should be no questioning between us. You are all I have left to love—my all of happiness; you give me all, while I—I have nothing to offer you in return, save a life devoted to your wishes, your happiness. But, at least, you shall never find me ungrateful, never wanting in my care and tenderness for you so long as we are spared to each other in this life of treachery and change."

She gave him one bright smile of tender assent, of speaking joy and gratitude, that might well turn the head when vouchsafed from the courted and beautiful heiress.

And then her head sank on his shoulder and she nestled in his arms with the yielding, confiding love that scarcely seemed natural to her proud temper.

"It is a new betrothal," whispered Victor, as his lips bent down to press her velvet cheek, "and a truer and more loving one on my part than when first yours, my Celia, for you have proved how more than worthy you are of my fondest affection. Had you been less generous and true you would never have informed me of this change in Miss Delancy's position, and you would never have released me from my engagement to let me return to the feet of a mercenary and unworthy girl. But my Celia is above such treachery, such meanness. She is the true descendant of an honourable race—its worthy heiress," he went on, impetuously. "Yes, I am indeed a proud and happy man."

Celia Vyvian was scarcely as deceived as Victor himself by the feverish rhapsody that seemed to work him up to the desired pitch of endurance and enthusiasm, that strove to paint all in the colours which ought to be the rightful hue.

But, whatever Victor in his mingled honour and unconscious misery might persuade himself, Celia could read the truth in the haggard cheek, the wan smile, the excited glitter in his eyes.

She knew full well that the struggle was still raging in his soul, she knew that the pain might be dulled by opiates, drowned by excitement, but that it still burned and rankled in the very depths of his heart.

His next words only confirmed the belief.

"Celia, let it be soon—soon," he said. "I cannot bear this suspense. When once you are mine all will be peace and love. I shall forget all but that you are the noblest and the truest of women and that I owe you all. Let the wedding be hastened; surely we need not wait for all the paraphernalia of ordinary commonplace weddings," he said, hastily. "You have all, Celia. It is not as if I could make preparations for my bride, or as if you were dependent on others for your arrangements and plans."

She shook her head with a playful smile.

"It is all very well, Sir Knight," she returned, archly, "to plan such primitive proceedings; but including these are others to be considered in the matter in this world of ours. And I am afraid we should excite terrible scandal if we violated every rule of propriety so daringly. It cannot be till—what shall I say?—three months' time," she continued, with a pretty saucy archness quite new to her.

"No, no; certainly not, Celia—you cannot mean it, you already spoke of April," he said, "and this is February. Let it be next month, or at the latest very early in April," he added.

"Well, May is unlucky, so I suppose I must even yield to your tyranny," she said. "But I will not promise more than that I will not let the delay carry us into that ill-omened month. The rest must depend on the lawyers and the modists and upholsterers. However, I daresay, with due exertions, the preparations will be brought into shape ere then."

Victor gave a sigh of relief.

"Thank Heaven," he exclaimed. "Celia, I shall not know a day's peace till the vows are spoken that bind us irrevocably to each other."

(To be continued.)

**HALF-PENNY POSTAGE.**—The Inland Revenue Department, upon which, on the abolition of the impressed stamp on newspapers from the 1st of October, 1870, the duty devolved of providing wrappers bearing halfpenny stamps and adhesive halfpenny labels, issued in the year ending the 1st of March, 1872, 141,939,840 adhesive halfpenny postage labels and 69,861,960 postal wrappers. Of the wrapper stamps 6,898,560, or nearly a tenth, were impressed on paper

supplied by the public. The Inland Revenue Commissioners state also in their report recently issued that in the first six months of the halfpenny postcard system they supplied 58,465,960 cards, but in the next twelve months ending the 31st of March, 1872, the issue was not much larger—viz., 62,848,320—than for the previous six months.

## THE FORTUNES OF BRAMBLETHORPE.

### CHAPTER XX.

"Now, what the deuce does all this mean?" the captain inquired, after he had put his name to the paper and Estelle had carefully folded it and put it in her purse.

"I will explain it to you," she answered. "Your brother's marriage was not a legal one, for the reason that his wife had a first husband living when she married the earl. Consequently the children are illegitimate, and you are the legitimate heir."

"I cannot believe it. How came you to be the first to make this statement?"

"Several years ago, when I was a little girl, and only a few months before the death of the Countess of Bramblethorpe, a stranger came here, one day, to see the earl. I happened to be in the library when the servant showed him into that room. Your brother was greatly excited at the sight of him, immediately arising and closing the door, and locking it to keep out intruders. I was a pet of the earl's, and had been playing about the room with some engraving which he had given me. It was evident that he had forgotten my presence after the entrance of the stranger, while I was so frightened at the anger and excitement of both men that I crept under a lounge near which I was and lay there trembling with fear all through their interview. I did not mean to hear what was not intended for me; but, the door being locked, I was too timid to make my situation known, and so crept into the hiding-place.

"The two had a long conversation, which ended in your brother's giving the stranger a large sum of money and in the other's swearing never again to set foot in England. The stranger was an Italian. I was too young to half comprehend what I overheard; yet still I understood that the validity of a marriage was discussed, and that my Aunt Valencia, as I called her, was threatened with some dreadful danger, the thought of which distracted the earl. I was glad enough to escape from the library, when finally the earl went forth with his unwelcome guest and saw him depart from his door.

"I never forgot certain sentences which were uttered at that time; and, as I grew older, they gained a deeper significance to me. My curiosity was aroused. I often peeped into the earl's private papers, as opportunity offered. It was only this last spring that chance at last placed a certain packet in my hand. As soon as I read those three letters I knew their full meaning, and that I had it in my power to ruin the children of the earl. They were my friends, and I intended silence, especially after I was engaged to the earl. But, since his death, his son has treated me shamefully!" Estelle's eyes grew black and glowing as she thought of her revenge. "I no longer feel bound by the ties of gratitude to keep the secret, and I have sold it to you, for I need the money to buy myself consideration in this selfish world."

"Money's a grand thing. I shall not dislike having plenty of it myself. Let me see the letters." "These are copies. I give them to you. I have the originals safely hidden and will deliver them to you or your lawyer whenever you are ready for action."

She remained quietly watching his flushed face while he read the papers she gave him.

"Here is a go!" ejaculated the captain, when he had finished them.

"You will act on these facts?" she asked, a little anxiously.

"Well! well! I must think it over. It will be dented hard on my nephew and these girls—pretty creatures, too."

"I have often heard you complain of your hard lot in being born a younger son. Fate now offers you compensation. Think of it! Instead of being a poor captain, always in debt, you will assume one of the proudest positions in England."

"By Jove, it's a temptation! But why are you so anxious, Miss Styles? I thought the family very kind to you," with a sharp look at her hard, cold face. "Yes, they patronize me," she said, her lip curling; "but I want my reward. Don't you see? With a fortune of fifty thousand pounds I may be able to buy myself a grand husband," and she laughed, sneeringly.

"These letters will not be sufficient to prove my claim."

"Not entirely. Of course you will have to send your lawyer to Naples to investigate. This Lady Cecelia, who wrote those letters, is still alive. He can manage to obtain her testimony. There is not even a shadow of doubt of your right to the earldom. All you have to do is to boldly assert that right. It's plain sailing."

"By Jupiter! you've a cool head for a woman!"

"And now I must be going. I hope you will not delay this matter one single day."

"I must talk with my wife about it."

"I would advise you not, captain, or rather, I should say, Earl Bramblethorpe. She's a good woman, but she has not your pride, your ambition. She would play the part of dependent and hanger-on all her life sooner than hurt the feelings of any one. She would torment you with her nice quibbles. Think only of your splendid luck! You may as well have the goods of this life as another! Do not be squeamish. If you do not look out for yourself who will do it for you?"

"Gad, you're right, Miss Estelle. You have brains in your little head. You spoke about going home. Do you intend to stay here to-night?"

"No. I have done visiting here," she said, with another sneering laugh. "Since I have become your advocate I must accept no favours from the other side. We will just slip out by the window, earl, and if you will see me to the gate, I will run home alone. I am not the least bit afraid."

They passed through the window, and he accompanied her to the gate, offering to go with her to the rectory, but she would not allow it.

"Whenever you desire to consult me come to the rectory," she said, in parting. "And now good-night and sweet dreams, Earl of Bramblethorpe."

Exquisite artifice! This bestowal of the title he had passed his life in envying and coveting was the most persuasive thing she could have done to induce the captain to assert what she had told him were his rights.

"By George! what will Sir Howard and the rest of 'em say to that?" he chuckled as he stumbled back to the house.

Lord Harry had retired to his room as soon as he came from his interview with Estelle. It was after ten o'clock and Captain De Vere ordered the house to be closed for the night, and retired also, feeling himself master of the Villa.

Estelle had not blundered when she based the effect of her disclosure upon the weak, selfish, and vain nature of Captain Bramblethorpe.

The next morning the captain came down late. Lord Harry and the young ladies had breakfasted; the latter had gone out on horseback, in company with a groom. They had called at the rectory for Estelle to join them, and she had sent out word that she did not care to ride that morning. Lord Harry had gone out on the balcony of the breakfast-room with a cigar, and sat there pretending to read the papers, but was lost in a gloomy reverie. He did not know of Estelle's visit to his uncle, but expected the blow would fall some time during the day.

Captain Bramblethorpe was in high good humour during his breakfast, to which his wife remained to keep him company. He was very affable to her and very lordly with the butler.

When the meal was over he too strolled out on the balcony.

"Good-morning, uncle."

"Good-morning, Harry. What's that?" as a crashing sound came from a remote part of the woods beyond the lake.

"I told Robinson he might fell three small trees for the sleepers to the little fancy bridge the gardener wishes to throw over the brook just below where it falls over the rocks."

Captain Bramblethorpe put his arms behind him, swelling his chest out in a sort of military pomposity characteristic of his manners.

"Had you not better consult me before you fell any more of my timber? You are an extravagant dog, Harry; and I suppose I might as well warn you from the first that I intend to take steps to protect my own property."

At this delicate and agreeable way of beginning his aggressions the young lord's face grew fiery red, and then as suddenly became pale. He threw his cigar over the railing into the grass, and stood up.

"So Miss Estelle has been to see you, uncle?"

"I had a call from her last evening. I suppose you know the facts of the case, Harry; yet you were selfish and dishonourable enough to seek to cover them up and keep me out of my own. Was that fair now?"

The captain felt so mean and uncomfortable that he spurred himself up to the unpleasant business on hand by accusing his nephew at the outset of being the wicked party.

"Be sparing of the terms you address to me, sir, or I shall forget that you are an older man and my uncle!" exclaimed Lord Harry, his eyes darting indignation.

The poor young man was receiving a new lesson in the book of human nature; having always conned the bright side, he was now to turn the leaf and study the opposite page.

"Don't you think, yourself, you have acted dishonestly?" reiterated the captain. "You would have kept on cheating me to the end if I had not been warned. I don't take it kindly of you, and I shall not feel called on to deal as generously by you as if you had come to me and told me the honest truth."

He retreated a step or two as he finished his sentence, for he did not like the look in the other's eye as he advanced upon him.

"Take back your words—cheat and dishonest—or I will make you eat them!"

"Well, well, well, I take them back. I suppose it was a mighty temptation to keep what you had been taught to consider your own."

"And is my own. Remember that, sir. Until you have proved to the contrary, you cannot dispossess me; and this proof may not be so ready as you imagine. The whole matter rests on the statement of one angry girl. I am not so foolish as to give up my birthright—disgrace and impoverish my sisters and myself—until I am compelled to do it. Miss Styles has not shown me her proofs. I take the liberty to doubt that she can establish what she has asserted. Until it is proved in court have a care, uncle, how you interfere in my affairs. And I warn you that I shall defend my cause and that of my sisters to the best of my ability. Since you have approached me in this coarse and unfeeling manner, let it be war to the knife! Take yourself out from under my roof until you can come with the legal authority and take possession."

"That I will," cried the infuriated captain. "I do not wish my wife to associate with you and your sisters one hour longer than is necessary. I will go and order her to pack up her—"

He never finished the sentence, for he tumbled backward over a chair and lay on the floor struggling for some seconds before he could regain his feet.

"Go!" thundered Lord Harry, looking as if about to strike again; and the captain went, feeling very sore on the head and bruised on the left shoulder, to order Mrs. Captain to be ready for the down train to London, which passed in half an hour.

For a few moments rage, anger, and scorn were so strong in Lord Harry's breast that there was no room for any emotion of regret or dismay; but when his sisters rode into the grounds and came dashing up in front of the balcony, looking too bright and too beautiful for this wearisome earth, the trial which was before them rushed over his soul, filling it with agony. His head drooped on his hands and he moaned aloud.

"Oh! what is that?" cried Augusta, alarmed at she knew not what. "Is any one else dead?"

"Come round into the library, my sisters. I must tell you something."

He had scarcely reached that apartment when Augusta came flying in, her eyes dilated, her cheeks pale.

"Mr. Donglass!" she gasped. "Has anything happened to him?"

"No, my darling. All your friends are alive and well, so far as I know."

"Then I care not what your news is," she murmured, dropping into a chair.

By this time Clara had reached the library, and Lord Harry, closing and locking the door, drew both his sisters to the sofa, and there, with a hand of each clasped in his own, tenderly communicated to them the whole miserable history. The soft little hands grew cold as death as they listened to it.

"Do you believe it?" faintly asked Lady Augusta.

"I am afraid it is true, from the fact that father was so distressed at the loss of the letters. I think it was worrying over this thing which gave him heart-disease."

"Poor father! poor mother!"

"Ay; our poor father had a heavy load on his mind. I blame him but for one thing—that instead of buying the silence of those parties he did not apply to the proper sources to have his marriage legalized and his children made legitimate. It could have been done. It would have been but justice. I think I can trace his feelings and his course of reasoning. He thought that in all probability the mistake never would come to light, and he should spare his tenderly loved wife all embarrassment and agitation on the subject. Secondly, knowing as he did, far better than we until now, the selfishness and grossness of his brother, he feared that De Vere, hearing of the condition of things, would oppose him in his attempt to legalize his children's rights and cause endless



scandal and trouble. Rather than provoke all this he ran the risk of keeping silence. It was a fatal mistake, for now that our father is gone we are powerless to defend ourselves."

"And it is our own Cousin Estelle who has betrayed us!" moaned Clara. "Oh, it hurts me so to think of it!"

"Poor child! you will be hurt to the heart's core many times, I am afraid. Would to Heaven I could defend you against the poisoned arrows of malice!"

"My dear, dear brother! at least we have you!" she said, embracing him.

Augusta, who had remained silent for some moments, arose and paced the floor. Her fingers were interlocked until they were purple, and her fair, delicate face was colourless.

"I shall never marry Mr. Douglass now," she said.

"Ah, sister, do not say that!" cried Clara. "Mr. Douglass loves you, darling—not your title or fortune. I feel certain he will insist upon your fulfilling your engagement. Do not you, Brother Harry?"

Wiser in the world's selfishness than his sisters, although still so untired, Lord Harry felt his heart sink at the question. How could he tell? Mr. Douglass, lifelong friend as he had been, might be as considerate of his own interests as some others. Had not Estelle, had not his own uncle jumped at the first opportunity of showing their ingratitude? He glanced at Augusta's sweet, hopeless face.

"I think Douglass is a true man," he said, in a low voice.

"He is," asserted Lady Augusta, pausing before them and looking them full in the eyes. "It is not that I doubt him. But I cannot become his wife, although he should urge me. I will not go to him a beggar, owing nothing—not even the name I bear," and her voice arose passionately high. "It is all over between him and myself," she added, sadly, and the tears trickled down her cheeks.

A knock came at the door. Lord Harry opened it. Mrs. Bramblethorpe was standing there, shawled and bonneted for her journey. Her eyes were red with weeping, and when she saw the young ladies she burst out anew with a tempest of sobs and tears.

"Forgive me," she cried; "it is none of my doing. I've been down on my knees to the captain, begging him to let the matter drop. I would not harm one hair of your heads, my pretty pets, for all the estates in the county put together. I don't want to crowd into your place! I don't want to be countess; and I will not be, as I told the captain! What do we want more than we have been accustomed to? A pretty figure I should out trying to play the grand lady. I'm not used to it—I have no taste for it. And, as I told the captain, we have no children. In a few years we shall be in our graves, and who will the title and estates go to then?—to some remote relative who does not expect nor deserve them. And you to be put to such shame and trouble! Oh, I cannot bear it! I wish you would let me stay with you, my dears. I'd never take a step away from here, to go with the captain, if he is my own husband, since he has used you so, if you will only let me stay. You will need me more than ever. Oh, I cannot bear to go away!" she sobbed.

"It is better for you to remain with your husband. The carriage is waiting, and the train is almost due," said Lord Harry, trying to speak sternly, in order to calm her, but himself much affected by her evident distress.

"Yes, dear, dear auntie, go with him—he has the better right to you," whispered Augusta. "We shall always love you, and be grateful to you, whatever happens."

"The captain says you will miss the train," said a servant, coming to the door; and poor little Mrs. Bramblethorpe, distracted by contending feelings, went weeping to the carriage, into which her husband climbed after her, and, without a parting word or bow, betook himself away from the young creatures who had conferred on him much affection and many benefits.

As they drove by the rectory Captain Bramblethorpe, consulting his watch, bade the driver stop at the door. He sprang out, rang the bell, and asked for Miss Styles. She came to the door instantly, as she was expecting a call from him.

"Can you give me the papers?" he asked. "I have but few minutes to spare, if I catch the express. His lordship at the Villa knocked me down for telling him the truth, now I am on my way to town to punish him in a way which he will least relish."

Estelle's eyes sparkled.

"I will bring you the package in one moment," she replied, and, flying upstairs, returned as soon as she had promised.

"These are the copies," she said. "Your legal adviser can see the originals whenever he demands. Good-bye, captain, and good luck! I shall expect to hear from you soon."

"Good-bye, my dear. You shall have the fifty

thousand pounds in your pocket before you know it. Ha! you're a sharp girl at a bargain. Fifty thousand pounds! It's too much!"

She laughed. He chuckled her under the chin, and went, grinning, back to the carriage. The driver whipped up his horses, and had just time to land the travellers on the platform and get out of the way when the express came thundering along.

That night, at his club in London, Captain Bramblethorpe aired his anticipated honours to the astonishment of the members who were present. He had consulted his lawyer, and had been told that he would have no difficulty in gaining his case.

Elate, triumphant, excited by wine, he was not the man to remain quiet until his triumph was legally assured, but told the whole story, with great gusto, to his friends.

On the following day it was whispered, cautiously, about London.

On the next it was talked aloud.

On the third it was hinted in the papers.

On the fourth the papers gave the story at length.

The breaking out of a war with France would hardly have created greater excitement nor been more eagerly discussed by all classes.

On the fifth day Mr. Douglass, coming from his estates in Scotland, on his way to Bramblethorpe Villa, passed through London, and heard it. He stopped over night to ascertain more fully the sources and probabilities of the rumour, and to make up his mind how he should act under the circumstances.

On the sixth day Mrs. MacLeod stumbled upon the scandal in a fashionable journal, as she was quietly sipping her breakfast tea. She read three columns about it, slowly and deliberately, aloud to her niece, who dropped her buttered toast and leaned back in her chair entirely absorbed in the strange story.

When Mrs. MacLeod concluded, and looked up at her niece to hear her opinion, she was still more surprised to find that young lady looking perfectly happy. She had come down to breakfast listless and languid. Now her eyes were like stars and her cheeks like roses. She was smiling to herself, and a soft tremor played over her features.

"Well, child?" queried the old lady, a little impatiently.

"Oh, aunt, I am so happy!"

"You little goose, what are you talking about?"

"I understand now why Lord Harry wrote that note to you instead of coming to see us. This was the great trouble and distress he was in. He was too noble, too honourable to approach me and seek my promise with this secret on his mind. He might have deceived me, but he would not. Oh, how good and admirable he is! Aunt, I am sure now that he loves me. Oh, how happy I am!"

She arose, went round to her aunt's side of the table, and hugged and kissed that lady until she was nearly suffocated.

"Child, you are choking me," said the old lady, a little crossly. "If the poor fellow really loves you I am sure you ought to be sorry for him! Of course you will not think of marrying him now!"

"Of course I will, dear aunt. That is, if he gives me the chance. Marry him—yes, if we both have to gather heather for a living. He is my equal now. Oh, how happy I am!"

"Indeed! The MacLeods of Melrose have no stain on their record, if you will please to remember. We are poor, but we are honourable, niece."

"I shall marry him for all that," quoth Agnes.

"You'd better wait till you're asked," said the elder lady, spitefully.

"I had not thought of that," said Agnes, blushing rose-red.

Then she flew upstairs to her own room, and turned the key that she might sit down alone and think how happy she was.

"If he keeps away from me," she reflected, "I will write to him and ask him to come. I am proud of his pride, but it shall not stand in the way of our understanding each other."

She had never been rich, so she cared little for the threatened loss of fortune. She had no title of her own, and it mattered not a feather's-weight to her that Lord Harry should lose his. They were now more equally matched. She could now prove her devotion. These were the sweet thoughts which gave her face so joyous, rapt and tender an expression that could poor Lord Harry have seen it then he would have forgotten all his woes in the one heavenly pleasure of loving and being loved.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

A DARK cloud settled down upon Bramblethorpe Villa after the captain had taken his departure—a cloud tangible as well as metaphorical; for that night began a week of drizzling, chilly November rain—wild gusts of wind eddied about the corners,

dead leaves strewed the walks, it was impossible to drive or walk with comfort, and the three young people were closed in with their own dreary thoughts.

Mr. Douglass was expected, but he did not arrive, nor was any letter received from him. Neither her brother nor Clara ventured to speak with Augusta about the strangeness of this; for, through all her suffering, as attested by her white cheeks and heavy eyes, there was a gentle reserve in her manner which told them that she could not endure to be consoled with.

Lord Harry knew that he ought to visit London and place his affairs in his lawyer's hands; but he felt so certain that there was no hope for him in the law that he had not the spirit to do so at once. He was then spared the effort by his attorney coming to the villa.

Mr. Hawkseye had heard the prevailing rumours and had come to see his noble client and ascertain how much there was in them.

"That I cannot myself tell you," said Lord Harry, as they were closeted together in the library. "I have seen none of the written proofs of what is stated. I think it is their purpose to keep them from us, until compelled to serve notice on us, so that we may have less time to prepare a defence. However, I imagine that we can make no defence that will be of any avail. The story is true, I myself believe; and my uncle is sufficiently unscrupulous to make the most of it."

"While there is life there is hope," remarked Mr. Hawkseye, cheerfully. "The earldom is worth fighting for, Lord Harry. Don't you yield an inch until you are obliged to. I wish I knew their line of attack," he added, thoughtfully.

"Miss Styles has some letters, which she stole from my father's desk, in which the facts are more or less plainly hinted at."

"I wish I could see these letters."

"I wish you could, sir."

Every word of this conversation, and much more which followed it, was overheard by the housekeeper, who had her ear at the keyhole all the time. It was a low trick, common to the underbred; but at least her purpose was honest.

Not an inmate of the Villa had been more really and deeply distressed than she at the ill fortune which had befallen it. The pride of the Bramblethorpes in themselves was not so great as her pride in them. And she was not only proud of them but she loved them. She had been in the household when these children were born—at their mother's death she had adopted them, as it were, so completely had she tried to be a sort of foster-mother to them. Lord Harry was the apple of her eye; while the young ladies were faultless. Never was there so fine a young lady as Augusta—never so bewitching a darling as Clara. Her hatred towards Estelle was intense. She had never liked her; and to think that the ungrateful buzzy should have wrought this trouble excited her to a pitch of anger which would have made murder easy to her. She felt, as she expressed it, as if "she could not keep her hands off her." She had used the privilege of the keyhole not so much out of curiosity as in the belief that, if she knew all, she could do something or try to do something to benefit the young people. When she heard them talking of the letters she resolved to make another effort to obtain them. She was only afraid that they were already sent to London.

The interview between Lord Harry and his lawyer took place just before dinner. As soon as that was on the table, and the family gathered about it, Perkins put on an old cloak with a hood and stole out, unobserved, into the grounds.

It was raining, and the cold wind made her shiver. The evening was well begun, it being now after seven o'clock; but there was a faint gray light from the new moon which strove to pierce the thick and lowering clouds. With a chilly shudder she drew her cloak closer about her, and stepped out briskly into the rain and gloom, taking the same path by which Estelle had come to the Villa a few nights previous. It was nearly two miles by this cross-path to the rectory, and the housekeeper was not so light of foot as she had once been; but she struggled forward, and before eight o'clock stood behind an evergreen tree in the rectory grounds, on the side of Miss Styles's room.

There was a light in Estelle's chamber. The curtain also had not been closed, for the rainy night was like a curtain to give a person a feeling of privacy and security. Perkins, hidden behind the larch, saw the young lady come to the window and look out for five or ten minutes at the grayness and dimness of the outer world. Then Estelle turned away, looked at herself in her mirror, girl-fashion, a little, then she placed a hand-lamp on a table, brought out her little writing-desk, placed it near the light, and, opening it, turned it upside-down, emptying its contents on the table.

Perkins parted the branches a little wider, staring more eagerly. From her standpoint, which was on a little artificial hillock, set with larches, she had a full view of the interior of the room. She had had a dream the previous night about that writing-desk, and Perkins was a great believer in dreams.

Ever since her hands had come in contact with it, during that stolen visit of hers to Estelle's room, she had felt an impression that the stolen letters were in the desk, though she had been unable to find them. In her dream this impression took vivid shape, so that she had awakened that morning with a great longing to get hold of that writing-desk.

She no longer felt cold or shivering. Her whole body burned, and her eyes shone like two fire-balls in the dark—for Miss Styles, with a little silver knife, was pressing up the edges of the piece of silk which lined the bottom of the box. She did this slowly and carefully. After she had loosened the lining, behold! some papers lying underneath! These she took out and read, one by one. There were three of them.

After she had held them a long time in her hands, apparently lost in deep reverie, she returned them to their secret place, and with a small brush, which she took from a mucilage-bottle beside her, re-pasted the lining over them, returned the other contents of the desk, looked it, set it aside, and shortly after left the room. Perkins heard her a few moments later, at the piano, singing and playing a careless melody, as if she had not a care in the world.

"I will have that desk this very night!" said the housekeeper to herself, "if I have to burn the rectory down to get it."

(To be continued.)

## LADY CHETWYND'S SPECTRE.

### CHAPTER XVII.

For a moment a dead silence reigned in the little inn parlour, during which the eyes of Gilbert Monk, of Mrs. Crowl, and of the inn mistress were fixed upon the wan young face of Bernice, as she stood in the doorway, wrapped from head to foot in the long black cloak with which Monk had provided her, and looking in upon them with a tremulous and uncertain eagerness of gaze. The eyes of the inn mistress were full of curiosity; those of Gilbert Monk and Mrs. Crowl were full of anxiety and dread. They had miscalculated the strength of the last dose administered to the young marchioness. They had not expected her to awaken so soon. They trembled lest her first words should arouse the suspicions of their hostess. Yet Gilbert Monk did not lose his presence of mind. He made a gesture to Mrs. Crowl, who arose quietly and approached Bernice.

Lady Chetwynd waved her back with a feeble movement. There was a vague look in the girl's face, a weakness and wavering in the expression of her dusky eyes, that declared that the influence of the narcotic still lingered. She was not broad awake, nor was she keenly alive to her whereabouts.

"Where is Roy?" she asked, in a weak voice, thrilling with alarm. "I want Roy. I want to go home! Take me home—now!"

"Yes, dear," said Gilbert Monk, assuming a paternal air, "we are going home as fast as possible."

The girl started, and looked at him in a faint wonder and surprise.

"That is Gilbert's voice," she murmured, "but the face is not Gilbert's—it is older than Gilbert's."

"Poor child!" sighed Monk, in an undertone. "Her mind wanders. She is talking of her brother now."

Mrs. Crowl laid her hand gently upon the arm of the youthful marchioness, who, puzzled and bewildered, retreated before her touch. As the slender black-robed figure disappeared into the bedroom Mrs. Crowl followed and locked the door on its inner side, remaining with Bernice.

"It's a sad thing to see a girl so young so near her end," said the inn mistress, wiping her eyes. "I'll go down and order the young lady's broth at once, sir. And whatever I can do, while you remain, to better the young lady, I shall be glad to do."

She courted and took her leave. When she had departed Mrs. Crowl opened the door, emerging into the parlour.

"The young lady is asleep again," she announced. "I shall guard against such things in the future, sir. She will awaken again soon, I think, and must then have her breakfast. I see no way to manage her except to keep her continually under the influence of narcotics."

"I don't like to do that," said Monk, thoughtfully. "She must awaken now and then to take food, or she will die. When she awakes again I will see her."

About an hour after this Mrs. Crowl took her breakfast to her, and she ate in utter silence, but with reviving appetite. After the meal she fell asleep again through utter weariness, and did not awaken until late in the afternoon. Then her dinner was served to her, and afterwards she insisted, in a pretty, peremptory way, upon rising and being dressed.

There was a bright fire in the little parlour, and a chintz-covered couch was drawn up before it. Mrs. Crowl carried Bernice to this couch, propped up her head with pillows, laid a bright travelling rug over her knees, and went back into the bedroom as Monk quitted the window at which he had been standing and came to greet his victim.

"My dear Bernice," he said, taking her thin hand in his, "I am glad to see you so much better. I have been very anxious about you. Your experience has been so terrible that I feared you would be seriously ill."

Monk sat down beside her, and took her fluttering hand.

"Be calm, Bernice," he said, in a tone meant to be reassuring. "Can you not trust me? Did I not rescue you from your tomb when your own husband had left you as dead? Can you not realize that I am your true friend, your brother? Be brave, Bernice, and I will tell you why I have not taken you home. The truth is Roy took the first train to London after your burial. He went the same night—before I rescued you. I dared not tell you before, lest the disappointment and the delay in seeing him would work you mischief."

"Gone to London?"

"Yes. He was overcome with grief, and went away for a change. He went with his relatives, who were obliged to return to town immediately. Sylvia accompanied him to town, and will visit Chetwynd's aunt. The Park is in the charge of servants. I would have taken you there, or to Mr. Sanders's house, but in either case rumours of your restoration to life would get about, and might reach Chetwynd's ears before we could break the news carefully to him."

"Yes, that is true," said Bernice, sighing.

"And that is not all. You are still very feeble. I have not dared to risk exciting you too soon, lest we lose you again and for ever. Believe me, Bernice, I have acted for the best. And, to tell you the truth, I could not have done otherwise, since I do not know Chetwynd's address, and must go up to town to search for him. I must break the glad tidings to him myself. It will be a great shock, an overpowering joy. His nature is so finely strung that the truth rudely told might almost kill him."

Bernice was too weak to combat Monk's arguments, had she differed in opinion with him. She believed herself in safe hands. Had not Gilbert Monk rescued her from her very sepulchre? And as he had saved her life, would he not, of course, hasten to restore her to her husband at the earliest possible moment? She had an implicit confidence in him, an implicit reliance upon him. Still her disappointment in not being restored to the marquise at once was almost more than she could bear.

"Where can you take me, Gilbert?" she asked, presently.

"I have a little place on the Welsh coast," said Monk, hesitatingly. "I might take you there. It is secluded, and I should not fear to leave you there with Mrs. Crowl while I seek for Chetwynd. The spot is romantic beyond description. You and Roy could spend your second honeymoon there, and remain until you are entirely recovered, and until the nine days' wonder to be excited by your resurrection shall have died away. You will like to be secluded for a little, I am sure—hidden away from coarsely staring eyes and wondering faces. It will be a hard trial for you to go back to the Park while the sensation of your marvellous restoration is in full vigour."

Bernice shuddered, and shrank back among her pillows.

"I—I don't think I could bear it," she said, shrinking. "I am too weak to bear the gossip and staring, Gilbert. I would like to hide away in your lonely house. Take me there, Gilbert, and then find Roy and bring him to me. Roy never told me that you had a house of your own, Gilbert."

"It is not my own," acknowledged Monk. "It is one I hired lately, after your marriage. I got it at a merely nominal rent, and so took it. You see, Bernice, I fancied that I should be driven out of Chetwynd Park by the new Lady Chetwynd, and that it behoved me to find new quarters. My funds are meagre, you know, and any home within range of my means must necessarily be out of the world. It's a long journey, but I think it would be the best place to take you. Indeed, I know no other place."

"Then take me there, Gilbert. But if the journey

is long, can we not go by rail? I can bear the fatigue, Gilbert, and I am so impatient and anxious."

"I could secure a compartment for ourselves," said Monk, musingly. "I could telegraph to the old Welsh housekeeper to have things in readiness for our arrival. When I expected to go there I sent up a lot of supplies for household consumption, and no doubt old Elsie could make us comfortable after a rude fashion. If you are willing, Bernice, we will journey on in the morning by rail."

Bernice assented eagerly.

The next morning, at an early hour, before day-break even, the travelling carriage was brought round to the door. Lady Chetwynd had been awakened and dressed in her gray cashmere costume. Her long black cloak was wrapped about her, a bonnet was put on her head and a veil was tied over her face. Monk carried her down to the carriage in his arms, and laid her upon the seat, folding shawls and a carriage rug about her, and putting hot water cans at her feet. She nestled in her warm nook without a word.

They drove to the station, arriving in time to catch the express train. Monk secured a first-class compartment for his party, carried the veiled young peeress into it, and arranged a cozy nook for her. Mrs. Crowl devoted herself to Bernice's comfort, being attentive yet unobtrusive, anticipating all the girl's wants with a kindness that might have passed for tenderness.

There were changes of trains to be made, but Monk secured at each change a compartment for the use of his party, and there was no intrusion.

It was evening when they alighted in the well-lit station at Carnarvon, in North Wales. Late as was the hour, Monk was anxious to push on towards his destination. He was tired of his partial disguise, and dreaded Bernice's farther inquiries concerning it. He dreaded stopping at an hotel in so large a town as Carnarvon, and was anxious to secure the bird he had captured in the cage he had prepared for her.

Monk left her in the waiting-room with Mrs. Crowl, and went away. He returned in half an hour with a post carriage, and carried the girl out to it, carefully wrapping her from the chilling winds.

There were two red lamps upon the carriage; the driver was used to the rough mountainous road, and Monk feared no dangers. He was in excellent spirits, as, after sending Mrs. Crowl opposite her young charge, he climbed up to the box beside the driver, and the ancient vehicle went rattling down the street.

The night deepened. The road grew rougher, and the jolting became terrible to Bernice. Yet, despite her fears and bodily discomforts, she fell into a doze at last. She was in the midst of a frightful dream, and the time was near midnight, when the carriage suddenly stopped. She started up in affright as Monk opened the carriage door.

"We are at our journey's end, Bernice," he said, and there was a sinister joy in his eyes and a sinister exultation in his voice. "We are at *Mawr Castle*."

### CHAPTER XVIII.

Upon that very evening on which the rescued young marchioness arrived in Wales Lord Chetwynd sat in her boudoir at Chetwynd Park. He was alone. The curtains were lowered over the windows, shutting out the night. The lights burned mellowly in the clustering tinted globes of the gaselier. The fire burned cheerfully in the grate. The piano was open, and a sheet of music was upon the rack as Bernice had left it. There was an arm-chair and a dainty little work-table in the recessed window, just as she had arisen from them. Before the hearth was her writing-table, as she had last used it.

The young marquise sat long in the gleam of the fire, in the mellow light of the gas, in the scarlet glow of the draperies. He had not been in this room since the day on which his wife was supposed to have died, and now it seemed to him that her presence still pervaded the room she had loved.

He was aroused from his reverie by a gentle knock upon the door. His pale cheeks flushed with resentment at the intrusion upon this hour sacred to him. He was about to arise to send away his visitor when the door softly opened, and Sylvia Monk glided like a beautiful snake into his presence.

She came toward the marquise with a slow, undulating grace, as if frightened at her own tenderness, yet not daring to retreat.

His lordship arched his brows in grave questioning.

"Oh, Roy!" cried out Miss Monk, in a sort of vehement tenderness. "They told me you were in here—for the first time since—since— And I have been standing outside the door in an agony, fearing



that you would do yourself an injury. At last I could hear the suspense no longer. Oh, Roy, you will not commit suicide?"

Lord Chetwynd looked surprised.

"I am no coward to shirk the burden laid upon me, Sylvia," he said, very gravely, his voice tremulous with passionate grief. "But I am tired of my life. The joy has gone from it for ever. She was all I had, Sylvia, my one awe lamb! No other being in the whole world understood me as she did. She was my better self—my guardian angel! And I have lost her!"

His stern lips quivered in an uncontrollable anguish.

The false woman whose hand had stricken the light and beauty from his life, who had robbed him of his wife, blanching a little, and then came nearer to him.

"Oh, Roy," she said, "you do not suffer alone. I loved Bernice too. She crept into my very heart during her brief stay with us. She was an angel, and she has gone to dwell with her kindred. My poor Roy, my heart bleeds for you. Here, in the room where she used to sit, let me comfort you."

"It seems to me as if she were near us, Sylvia. She promised when she was dying to be my guardian angel, if she would be permitted. I believe she is my guardian angel now—that she is here beside us at this moment."

Sylvia started, and darted a glance about her of fearful inquiry. Her face grew livid in a sudden terror. She shrank within herself.

"I—I don't think she is here!" she said, huskily.

"I hope and pray that she is," said Lord Chetwynd. "I hope that she reads my heart like an open book, that my soul is laid bare to her gaze, that she knows all my love and agony and despair! If Heaven has permitted her to return to guide me, rest assured, Sylvia, that she reads us thoroughly, that she knows us at least through and through, that our souls are laid bare to her. The thought is sweet."

Miss Monk's teeth chattered. A horrible fear came upon her. Her expectations were all alive. She sent peering glances behind the furniture, and into the distant corners. She quailed at the thought that perhaps Bernice now knew of her guilt, and meant to haunt her evermore.

"Your fancies are morbid, Roy," said Miss Monk, uneasily. "You frighten me, and set my nerves all quivering. I am almost afraid to remain here. The doctor must give you a tonic to steady your nerves. By-and-by, when this first grief has worn away, you will be reconciled to the thought that Bernice is in heaven. I think it selfish to want to keep Bernice here to share your sorrows, when her life might be all joy. Have you not been crying? Your eyes show it. Can the sight of your anguish be pleasant to her, if she really is your guardian angel?"

Chetwynd flushed, but did not answer.

"You are not the first bereaved husband, Roy," continued Miss Monk, gently. "Others have suffered as you have, and have lived to show their scars. My poor boy, life is one long series of bereavements. We must bear it; it is all we can do. We will talk often of our dear one, and by-and-by peace will come. Dear Roy," and Miss Monk crept still nearer to him and forced a tear or two, "let me comfort you. Let me be your sister indeed."

"You are very kind to me, Sylvia," he said, at last, gratefully. "Bernice loved you; I do not forget; you gave brightness to her life here. She never had a girl friend before. I want the doors of these rooms kept locked, and you must keep the keys, Sylvia. Sometimes you must come in here and dust her books and things, but leave everything as when her hands last touched it. In the dressing-room one of her little slippers lies on the floor, as she cast it off on the night she was taken with her chill. In her pin-cushion she thrust her brooch. Leave them so. Do not move them, not even to dust them. Everything must be as she left it."

"Yes, Roy. You are going to change your rooms, then?"

"I am going away, Sylvia. I cannot remain here while my wound is fresh. I start a dozen times each day, fancying that I hear her voice calling me, or her step on the stair—just as she prophesied, Sylvia. I can never learn resignation here, when I am continually reminded of the joys I have known but shall know no more. I have talked with the belliff to-day, and shall leave things in his hands during the summer. I beg you to remain at Chetwynd Park. It is your home, Sylvia. The servants will respect your authority, and you will be mistress."

"Don't go, Roy—I cannot have you go."

"I must go. Don't seek to dissuade me. My arrangements are all made. I start in the morning, Sylvia. No more—not a word, Sylvia. Remember

that my heart is breaking, and that I go to find peace. You may hear from me occasionally—I cannot promise. I have given Sanders orders to pay your annuity at the usual periods. If you want more money, he will supply you. He has orders also to transmit to Gilbert the sum of one thousand pounds, to assist him in his choice or study of a profession. If Gilbert requires a larger sum, Sanders will supply it. I shall leave no address. I go to forget. Bear with me, Sylvia, and remember that you and Gilbert are my nearest friends now."

Miss Monk reflected that Lord Chetwynd's absence would relieve her from the necessity of feigning a grief she did not feel. He would be likely to forget Bernice sooner among the romantic scenes of a foreign land. Upon the whole, it was best that he should go.

She felt sure of her ultimate victory, and so signified her approval of his resolve to travel.

"I shall not see you in the morning, Sylvia," said the marquise, gravely. "Mrs. Skewer will wait upon me at breakfast. I will say good-bye to you now."

He rose, and she imitated his example. He held out his hand to her. She seized upon it, pressed it, and suddenly raised it to her lips. The next moment, as if covered with confusion, and choking with sobs, she swept like a gliding snake from the room.

(To be continued.)

## SCIENCE.

A NEW AIR BREAK has been tried on the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway. It brought up a train, going at twenty-five miles an hour, in seventeen seconds. It is not added how it brought up the passengers.

BRICK KILNS.—In the design of Mr. A. Batchelor, of Brookham, Surrey, for improved kilns for burning bricks, pottery, and lime, a series of four distinct kilns are so arranged round one common furnace as to allow of three of them being worked in rotation for drying, burning, and cooling, while the fourth is in reserve, emptying and refilling. The kilns save, according to the inventor, from four to five cwt. of coal per thousand bricks, and reduce the ordinary time of burning from ninety-six to forty hours, this result being obtained by utilizing all the waste heat given off from the burning bricks.

ROOFING WITH SLATES.—An architect says he has been in the habit for many years of bedding his roofing slates in hydraulic cement, instead of having them nailed on dry in the usual way, which leaves them subject to be rattled by the wind, and to be broken by any accidental pressure. The cement soon sets and hardens, so that the roof becomes like a solid wall. The extra cost is 10 or 15 per cent., and he thinks it good economy, considering only its permanency and the saving in repairs; but besides this it affords great safety against fire, for slate laid in the usual way will not protect the wood underneath from the heat of a fire at a short distance.

NEW SHIPS FOR THE ROYAL NAVY.—The following particulars regarding ships now building for the royal navy have been drawn from various sources: The "Raleigh," iron screw frigate, sheathed with wood, 4,655 (3,210) tons, 6,000 (800) horse-power, building at Chatham Dockyard, will shortly be launched. The ship now occupied by the "Raleigh" is required as early as possible for the building of the great ironclad "Superb." A day or two ago steam was got up on board the "Rideman," a gun-vessel, at Chatham, recently built there, to enable the authorities to make a preliminary trial of her engines. By the building of "Albatross," a composite screw sloop, 594 (727) tons, 720 (120) horse-power, which has been begun on No. 4 building slip at Chatham dockyard, another addition will be made to the useful fleet of vessels of this class, several of which have been launched of late. The "Albatross" will be similar to several vessels built at Chatham yard recently, except that there will be some few alterations and improvements. A large portion of the ironwork has been laid down, and more material is being prepared. The dimensions of the ship will be—length between perpendiculars, 160 feet; extreme breadth, 31 feet 4 inches; depth in hold, 15 feet 5 inches.

## PHOTOGRAPH PORTRAITS—AN IMPROVEMENT.

THE merits of the new method of shortening the exposure of photographic plates in taking gallery portraits have been the subject of discussion at a recent meeting, when Mr. H. J. Newton exhibited a negative upon which were two pictures, both of the same subject, showing no apparent difference, although one was taken with an exposure of seventeen seconds, the other with only seven seconds. In the example of another negative one of the pictures had an exposure of thirty-six seconds, the other eighteen seconds, both equally good.

The operation is as follows: The sensitive plate

is first placed in the camera and exposed to red light, which is admitted through the tube, the mouth of which is covered by a red coloured glass. This exposure to red light is continued for from ten to twenty seconds. The shield slide is then pushed in and the red glass removed after which the portrait of the sitter is taken in the usual manner, except that the time of sitting is greatly reduced.

This is a very simple improvement. Mr. Anthony, Mr. Kurtz, and other photographers regarded the process as quite useful. Mr. Kurtz said the great object of the photographer, in portraiture, was to secure a natural expression of the features; in a long exposure it was impossible for any sitter to maintain such expression. Then, in taking portraits of children, it is of the first importance to have a short exposure of the plates. The improved process gives these advantages, without much perceptible loss in the details.

## STEAM AS A FIRE EXTINGUISHER.

THE effectiveness of steam as a fire extinguisher was illustrated, says Dr. Wiedenbuech, of Wiesbaden, on the occasion of a fire in a factory 180 feet long and 30 feet wide; it was one storey high, with an attic separated by a wooden floor. The attic was filled with a great many tons of rags, shavings, leather scraps, etc., and among these a fire broke out in the night, which was only discovered when the whole roof was in flames; it fell in, and the fate of the lower storey appeared sealed. There was a steam boiler in an outhouse with the furnace banked; the fire therein was quickly increased by means of wood, the steam being still up. A courageous carpenter went into the burning factory, and by means of a heavy axe broke the first cast-iron steam pipe he could reach. Of course the steam immediately escaped under considerable pressure, filled the whole place, and extinguished one burning mass after the other, and even the rag heaps in the attic, which after the fall of the roof were burning in the open air, became more and more surrounded with steam, so that in half an hour after the steam was admitted all danger was considered over.

The German papers point out that every manufacturer who uses a steam boiler possesses the most powerful fire-extinguisher, which he may make available by proper additional arrangements. For instance, wrought-iron gas pipes connected with the boiler, branching off into every room, may be provided with stopcocks which, in case of fire, may be turned on, and so every portion of the building may be filled with steam. It is recommended especially that theatres should have steam tubes connected with a system of heating in which, by means of petroleum or some equivalent as fuel, a great quantity of steam could be raised within ten minutes or even less, and blown into the burning portion of the building. As no pressure is necessary for such an apparatus it may be constructed in a simple manner and still be perfectly safe; but the quantity of steam must be sufficient, and therefore the whole problem is to generate the largest amount of steam at low temperature and pressure.

Finally, it is proposed in Germany to make transportable steam boilers and connect them in case of fire with a system of tubes, with which the buildings are to be provided, and which is accessible at the front of the house, so as to be easily connected with the steam generator in the street. We may here remark that this very same plan was patented in America, in the spring of 1870, by Dr. Orazio Lugo, a distinguished chemist at that time residing in Baltimore. The plan was at that time very favourably received by insurance companies, and it is remarkable that it has not yet received a more extensive application.

LABOUR is the greatest promoter of happiness to individuals, of civilization and prosperity to nations. Steady work, with regular earnings, will do more for the elevation and comfort of the labouring man than any other effort that can be made in this direction.

THE CARE OF CHILDREN.—Bare limbs of children gratify the vanity of mothers, but they send multitudes of beautiful children to a premature grave. It would be safer to have the arms, hands, feet, and legs warmly encased in double thickness of woollen flannel, with nothing whatever on the body but a common night-gown, in the fall of the year. It is especially important to keep the extremities of children and infants warm for every second of their existence. Whether a child is ill or well when the hands and feet begin to get cold it is nearing the grave, because the blood retreats to the inner organs, oppresses them, causing painful and dangerous congestions and inflammations, which often induce death in a few hours, as in croup, diphtheria, quinsy, and the like. A young mother should never go bed until she has noticed that the feet of her little sleeping ones are abundantly warm; to be assured of that is to know that croup before the morning is impossible.



[A GLEAM OF CONSOLATION.]

## THE BLACK BROOK.

"I'd like to kill the scoundrel!"

Wilfred Anderson uttered the rash words aloud and clenched his fists. He forgot that he was in a public street, forgot everything but the sorrow which lay heavy on his heart, and which was now turning to anger and despair by the infliction of a new piece of cruelty.

Ever since his father's death he had battled with the world to get bread for his mother and sister. Denying himself comfortable clothes, he had striven to lay by a few pounds to pay off the mortgage on his home, and now, when his hopes were almost realized, old Bertram West had notified him that he should foreclose at once. Only one hundred pounds were wanting, but the selfish creditor would not wait. Like a hungry beast he yearned for his prey. And this was to be the end of Wilfred's struggles, this the reward of his self-denial. It cut deep into his soul, and aroused the worst passions of his nature.

In other days Bertram West had borrowed money of Wilfred's father, and now showed his gratitude by turning the son of his benefactor out of doors, and added insult to injury by refusing to treat with him in person, but sent his agent, a low, mean, crafty fellow, who was as small and inferior in stature as he was in mind.

All this rankled in the young man's heart and inflamed his brain, but there was still another complication to torture him. Flora West, the beauty of the village, and one of the dearest, sweetest little women that ever breathed, had been Wilfred's companion from childhood, and just before his father died they were betrothed, but when the estate was settled and Bertram West found that Robert Anderson had left comparatively nothing, he withdrew Flora from Wilfred's society, and informed him by letter that he must resign all thoughts of Flora and pay the mortgage as soon as possible, for now he had no business to love.

Hard, unkind as this was Wilfred bore it bravely, and ceased visiting at the West mansion, but did not cease to meet Flora, who, true to her heart and word, held stolen interviews with him in a little glen on the outskirts of the village. These rare moments of bliss strengthened Wilfred, and helped him to endure the cares of life with more cheerfulness, more hope.

But at last old Bertram West discovered the lovers' trysting-place, and to prevent further meetings sent Flora off to an aunt in Hartford, and warned Wilfred, as I have said, that he should foreclose the mortgage at once.

With this accumulation of griefs and foul wrongs pressing upon his heart and soul, it is not to be wondered at that Wilfred Anderson gave utterance to the exclamation that begins my story. All of us, suffering intensely, have doubtless said similar words, but circumstances make such either significant or pointless, and it was Wilfred's misfortune to be overheard, and hence a mere ebullition of anger became a serious threat.

Peter Petty, Bertram West's agent, coming suddenly round a corner in the rear of Wilfred, had heard his words and chuckled to himself with vindictive satisfaction, then, assuming a half-regretful look, he said:

"Hard words, bad words, Mr. Anderson; lucky for you that I'm friendly to you."

Wilfred turned round, his eyes dilating with wrath, his lips curling with ineffable scorn.

"Friendly to me, you sneaking hound! Use my luckless words if you can, you cannot make me more miserable than you have. One effort of yours with Bertram West would save my home to my mother and sister, but you'd die before you'd give it. Get out of my path; my feelings are like fire in my breast, and your evil face is hateful to me."

"Hum, I'll excuse you, because you're mad, but I'd advise you to control yourself. I've no influence with my patron. If you hadn't made an idiot of yourself over that girl—"

"Scoundrel!" The word left Wilfred's lips with a half-shriek, and, clutching the man by the neck, he shook him violently, then, throwing him from him, he exclaimed: "Now go, you deformed toad, and never speak to me again. Because I'm poor you think you can jeer at my sacred love and insult my dearest emotions, but as long as these arms last no man shall take advantage of my poverty to scoff at my heart. Begone, or I'll throw you into the gutter."

"Sneaking hound," muttered Peter Petty, rubbing his aching sides, and glancing at the young man like a wounded snake. "Evil face." Just wait, Mr. Wilfred Anderson! Oh, yes, you are an honest, hard-working young man, but we'll see, we'll see." And Peter crawled off, repeating his words with increasing malignity.

Wilfred continued on to his shop and worked diligently until sunset; then he went home to his mother and sister.

They noticed as soon as he entered the room that he was unusually depressed, and anxiously inquired the cause. He sought to elude their queries, but at length told them of his rencontre with Petty.

"Oh, if this had not happened," exclaimed Mrs. Anderson, clasping her hands tightly together. "I cannot blame you, Wilfred, for you have been patient up to this time, and none of us can bear everything. But, oh, my boy, I fear it will not end here."

"You are superstitious, mother," he said, with a faint smile, but there was a singular heaviness at his heart.

His sister Lela was crying softly, her head bent forward upon her hands. The thought of losing their dear old home, and the indefinable dread that her mother's remarks had sent over her nature, opened the flood-gates of her grief.

Wilfred sought to cheer her, but she only cried still more violently, and clung to him with a strange tenacity. Altogether it was a sad, miserable evening, and all were thankful when it was time to retire.

The next morning Wilfred was up at five o'clock, and at six he started for a town seven miles distant, in company with four fellow-workmen. His mother wept when he left her and hung around his neck until he was obliged to release himself. Many a time he had gone a much greater distance and she had thought nothing of it; but now there seemed to be a cloud hanging over him, and the mother's yearning heart would fain have cried: "Come back, come back," but her reason argued that her continued trials had made her weak and fearful, and so she tried to smile through her tears as she saw her handsome boy fade away in the distance.

At six o'clock in the evening the job was completed, and Wilfred supposed his companions would start for home at once; but no, they had decided to remain over night, and attend a party at the house of a mutual acquaintance. No persuasion, however, could induce him to remain, for he knew that his mother and sister would be anxious, so he started at seven to walk home.

On the road he encountered a friend whom he had not seen for years. The force of old associations compelled him to pause and go to the inn with George Arnold to have a cosy chat. But, dear as were the memories of the past and the society of his old friend, he broke away from him at ten minutes past eight, and once more resumed his journey.

One hour later he drew near the Black Brook, a rivulet running through a dark, dense glen of willows and alders. Thinking he heard a strange noise in the coppice, he paused and listened.

Suddenly a smothered shriek sounded hoarsely upon the night air, and he darted into the recesses of the glen. As he reached the side of the brook the clouds parted, and a faint ray of light from the moon disclosed a scene that made his blood run cold with horror. There, waist-deep in the water, stood an old man, his face distorted with terror, and one hand imploringly upraised, while half kneeling on the bank was a younger man, with a large stone menacingly uplifted in his left hand. There was murder in his eye and attitude.

Wilfred darted forward, but the underbrush tripped him up, and he fell heavily; and the same instant he heard the awful crash of the stone as it met its victim's skull. Appalled, for an instant he remained motionless, and then sprang up only to be dashed to the ground by the flying assassin.

Bruised and bewildered, he struggled to his feet again, and neared the fatal spot. Groping about in the darkness, he caught the senseless body of the old man, and dragged it partially ashore, when the rays of a lantern burst full upon him, and the squeaking voice of Peter Petty rang out, with malicious sharpness:

"Ho! We've caught him. Surround him, my men! Zounds! it's Anderson, as I live! I'm very, very sorry."

Stupefied for a moment by the accusing circumstances which surrounded him, and which were now only too terribly evident to himself, Wilfred groaned.



aloud, and pressed his hand to his brow. It was the worst thing he could have done—it was taken as a proof of remorse.

Instantly he was arrested and firmly bound, and then the constables bade him look upon his victim. Wilfred turned deathly pale as he beheld Bertram West; until this moment he knew not whom he was trying to rescue. The old man was nearly dead, and insensible, but Peter Petty dashed water in his face, forced brandy between his lips, and then there were signs of returning life.

Pushing Wilfred close to him, Peter said:

"Look at this man, Mr. West! Look quick! Did he do it?"

"Yes, he did it," came in a faint whisper from the pale lips, and the spirit of Bertram West passed from earth.

In a low, narrow, dismal cell sat Wilfred Anderson, his arms folded across his chest, his wild, sunken eyes directed upon the cold floor. At intervals he trembled, and a low moan escaped his lips. Thoughts of his mother and Lela, and their heart-breaking anguish, had worn him almost to a skeleton. He had but one hope now, and that was Heaven. No one but those who loved him believed in his innocence.

Presently he started, and raised one hand, for he heard steps along the stone corridor. Then his cell was opened, and Flora West came in, her face blanched white, and traces of tears on her cheeks. He dared not look up. Could she believe him guilty? His frame shook with suppressed emotion.

"Willie!" The voice was low and tremulous.

"Oh, Flora, do you believe me guilty? Speak, dearest! I am willing to die, knowing that you believe me innocent."

"I do! Oh, my poor love, I do!"

"Heaven bless you, my good angel!"

He clasped her in his arms, and her tears mingled with his, her sobs seemed to become a part of his, and for moments they were as little children awayed by grief. The jailer at the door wiped his eyes, and coughed down his rising sobs, and then, to prevent himself from giving way to emotion, he terminated the interview.

It was the day of the trial of Wilfred Anderson for the murder of Bertram West, and the case attracted extraordinary interest, because of the relation which the accused held toward the daughter of the murdered man.

At an early hour the court was full, and still the crowd surged against the doors. The accused was placed in the dock, and the attorney-general arose to address the court upon the case, and what he expected to prove.

Wilfred Anderson listened calmly, occasionally glancing toward his mother and sister, with a beautiful resignation in his white face. The angel of peace seemed hovering over him.

His counsel, a young man of little practice in his profession, and features thin and not very prepossessing, was regarded by the attorney-general as a foe unworthy of his steel, and other members of the bar seemed to agree with him, judging by their sidelong glances.

The opening address over, the witnesses were sworn, and then Peter Petty was called. His testimony was substantially as follows:

"On the seventh day of October Bertram West left his house to go to the adjacent village. He started about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, on horseback. At half-past eight o'clock in the evening I became anxious about him, and started with two constables to find him. When we got to a place in the Black Brook called Muddy Hollow I heard a noise, and, upon approaching nearer, I saw the prisoner drawing the body of Mr. West out of the water. The constables at once accosted him. Then I bathed Mr. West's face, forced some brandy between his lips, and he revived. I asked him if Mr. Anderson did this; he said, 'Yes, he did it,' and died."

The attorney-general intimated to the counsel for the defence that he could cross-examine.

"Mr. Petty, on what part of Mr. West's body was the prisoner's hands when you first saw him?" asked the pale Mr. Shirley.

"On his shoulders, sir."

"He was not pushing Mr. West down into the water then?"

"No, sir."

"Now, sir, when you asked Mr. West to identify his supposed assailant was there blood in and around Mr. West's eyes?"

"No, sir, I had washed it away."

"Well, sir, might not Mr. West have taken Mr. Jones, the younger constable, for his assailant just as easily as Mr. Anderson?"

"I object," said the attorney-general, jumping up.

"Mr. Shirley, what is the object of this examination?" queried the senior judge.

"To show that Mr. West, in that brief moment, was not in a condition to recognize anybody."

"Proceed, sir."

"Now, Mr. Petty, answer my question," said the counsel for the defence.

"No, sir, he could not have taken Mr. Jones for his assailant, for Mr. Jones held the lantern."

"Are you sure of that, sir?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why did you testify in the preliminary hearing that you held the lantern yourself?"

Mr. Petty coughed and dropped his eyes. There was a sensation in court, but the witness soon recovered himself.

"It's an error of my memory. I did hold the lantern."

"Ah! you did. And Mr. Jones stood near the murdered man, did he not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, sir, did Mr. West recognize you?"

"I think he did, sir."

"Stop, sir. I don't care what you think. Do you know whether he did or not?"

"No, sir," he replied, very reluctantly.

"Did he call you by name?"

"No, sir."

"Now, sir, will you swear that Bertram West fixed his eyes on young Anderson when you asked him to identify his assailant?"

"I won't swear to that."

"And Mr. Jones and Mr. Anderson stood side by side, did they not?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Shirley waved his hand and sat down. The spectators had a better opinion of the young barrister now, and poor Flora felt a thrill of hope; but both were dissipated when the attorney-general recalled Mr. Petty, and he testified to Wilfred's exclamation in the street only one day previously: "I'd like to kill the scoundrel."

This was put in to prove malice aforethought, and, although Mr. Shirley tried to weaken it, it remained a dark obstacle.

Then the two constables were called, and they corroborated Peter Petty's story in every particular. Following them came Wilfred's fellow-workmen, who testified that he would not stay with them over night, and that he gave no reason why he would not. This of course was construed against the prisoner, and the case began to assume a very dubious aspect, which was made positively black by the landlord of the inn, who testified that George Arnold begged Anderson to remain with him longer, but Anderson would not, and, furthermore, gave no reason. He said Anderson left there at ten minutes past eight, and his last words to Arnold were: "I shall either be better or worse off when you see me again."

Wilfred remembered those words, and that he referred to his gloomy financial prospects; but the inference the jury drew was that of a dark intention.

Lela now fainted, and was carried from the room. Wilfred nearly choked as he saw his sister's pale, unconscious face and heard Flora's sobs.

The constables were now recalled to testify to the evidence of a struggle between West and Anderson, by the appearance of the latter's clothes and the ground near the scene of the conflict.

In regard to the latter it transpired that there were two sets, as one might say, of tracks, that is, marks of a large boot without heels, and marks of a small boot with heels; the latter were acknowledged to be those of Wilfred Anderson, and that raised an unanticipated question: Whose were the others? The constables had not been in that particular place, and Mr. West had not a large foot, and always wore heels. It was seemingly a small point, but Mr. Shirley worked on it until he obtained a permit for the jury to visit the spot.

When they returned, another witness, a Mr. Welch, was called. His story was as follows:

"I am the person upon whom Mr. West called on the seventh day of October. He said he should go home by the way of the Black Brook. I advised him not to do so. It was a lonely road. He left my house at six o'clock. Shortly afterwards I remembered that I had forgotten something that I wished to say, and so I harnessed a horse and went after him. I drove round by the common and missed him. It was then about eight o'clock. Then I started toward the Black Brook road and reached Muddy Hollow about half-past eight. As I drove by I saw a man go into the coppice, but thought nothing of it. I remember that he wore a light felt hat. I am confident that it was Anderson. I drove on. Not meeting Mr. West, I turned about again and got back to the hollow just as the constables came out with the prisoner and the wounded man."

This evidence was introduced to connect Anderson's movements, to show his intention of lying in wait for West, and in a measure of course it corroborated the testimony of the landlord of the inn.

Everybody felt that the prisoner was doomed, and that it was useless for Mr. Shirley to cross-examine. But the homely lawyer was indomitable; he acted

like a hound on the scent of a fox, yet perplexed by a triple trail.

"Mr. Welch, what was Mr. West's business with you?" queried the young barrister.

"He wanted me to quarry stone for him; there was also some talk about getting out some lumber."

"Mr. Welch, how far is it from your house to Muddy Hollow, by the common road, coming round through the north-eastern part of the town?"

"It's a good fourteen miles, sir."

"Yes, well, what time did you leave your house to follow Mr. West?"

"About seven o'clock, sir."

"Is your horse lame, Mr. Welch?"

"Which one, sir?"

The bar smiled, but Mr. Shirley kept on his track firmly.

"The bay one—the one you drove on this seventh day of October."

"Yes, sir."

"And do you mean to tell this jury that you drove this horse fourteen miles in one hour and thirty minutes over the hilly common road?"

"I didn't say so, sir."

"You said you started at seven o'clock, and in your direct testimony you said you reached Muddy Hollow at half past eight. Now did you or did you not?"

"I did. I don't want to take back anything I've said," said the witness, doggedly.

His manner did not have a good effect upon the jury.

The attorney-general saw it and accused Mr. Shirley of badgering the witness, but the latter only smiled in his quiet way and went on.

"How far did you drive on the Black Brook road after you saw this man go into the coppice?"

"About a mile and a half."

"No more?"

"No, sir."

"Then you were forty-five minutes going three miles, for it is in evidence that it was a quarter past nine when the constable came out of the coppice. Is this true, Mr. Welch?"

The witness was becoming very uneasy, and muttered:

"I suppose so."

"Don't you know, sir?"

"Yes," he growled.

"Then it was?"

"Yes."

"Well, now, Mr. Welch," said the young barrister, in a ringing voice, "what were you so long in that vicinity for?"

"To meet Mr. West, of course."

"What! when he left your house at six o'clock?"

"He might have stopped on the road, I thought."

"Why didn't you go to his house to see if he hadn't got home?"

"I didn't think of it."

"Didn't you suppose he was at home?"

The witness grew more restless. The attorney-general objected to the question, and it was ruled out. Nothing daunted Mr. Shirley proceeded.

"Mr. Welch, do you wear heels on your boots?"

"Not always."

"Did you have a pair of boots with heels that night?"

"I don't remember."

"Will you swear that at this moment you can't recollect whether you did or not?"

"No, I won't."

"Then you can remember, can you?"

"Not surely; but think my boots had heels."

"Will you swear they did?"

"No, sir."

"Well, now, Mr. Welch, I see you have an odd button on your coat. Will you tell me how you lost the matched one?"

"I don't remember such little things."

"But I want to know. Was it lost the seventh day of October?"

"I don't think it was."

"Did you have it on your coat at nine o'clock that evening?" queried the young barrister, looking the witness straight in the eye.

He faltered a little, and said:

"I think I did."

"Will you swear you did?"

"No, sir."

"Is this the button you lost?" asked Mr. Shirley, taking from his pocket a horn button with raised centre.

"It was like that."

"Is it yours?"

"I won't say either way."

Perspiring like rain, the witness left the box, and as he went along by the jury they were seen to look at his feet, and the spectators began to feel a strange doubt.

The defence now opened their case, and Mr. Shirley recounted the circumstances which brought his client to the fatal spot, adding:

"When he sprang up after falling down in the underbrush he was again knocked down by com-

ing in contact with the assassin. As he fell he clutched his coat, and this button remained in his hand."

He displayed the button as he spoke.

The rest of Mr. Shirley's speech was a masterly effort, and when he finished there was not a dry eye in court.

There being no witnesses for the defence the attorney-general followed, but it was evident that he could not obliterate the impression the youthful barrister had made.

And now occurred a strange episode.

Mr. Solon Welch was found dead in his chair, and on the inside of his coat was pinned a paper with the words:

"I killed Bertram West."

This, of course, created great excitement, and it was moments ere the spectators could be brought into order again; then a verdict of "Not guilty" was rendered.

Wilfred Anderson bowed his head and thanked Heaven, while his mother and Flora clung about his neck.

Lela, coming in at that instant, threw her arms around Wallace Shirley's neck and blessed him; and his eyes swam with joyous tears at his success.

Then Wilfred Anderson was discharged, and his townspeople followed him home with shouts of gladness.

In the confusion Peter Petty escaped and has never been heard from since.

Three months later Wilfred Anderson married Flora West, and Wallace Shirley had won the best cause he ever undertook.—*Lela Anderson's boys and hand.* W. G.

#### CANALS.

THE Suez Canal absorbs half its receipts in cleaning out the sand which fills it annually, and it is not yet known whether it is a pecuniary success. The ancients built a canal at right angles to ours, because they knew it would not fill up if built in that direction, and they knew such a one as ours would. There were magnificent canals in the land of the Jews, with perfectly arranged gates and sluices. We have only just begun to understand ventilation properly for our houses; yet late experiments at the Pyramids in Egypt show that those Egyptian tombs were ventilated in the most perfect and scientific manner.

Again, cement is modern, for the ancients dressed and joined their stones so closely that, in buildings thousands of years old, the thin blade of a penknife cannot be forced between them. The railroad dates back to Egypt. Arago has claimed that they had a knowledge of steam. A painting has been discovered of a ship full of machinery, and a French engineer said that the arrangement of this machinery could only be accounted for by supposing the motive power to have been steam. Bramah acknowledges that he took the idea of his celebrated lock from an ancient Egyptian pattern. De Toqueville says there was no social question that was not discussed to rage in Egypt.

THE Bay of Balaklava has just been surveyed with a view to the establishment of a military port, to be connected with Sebastopol by a canal.

DEATH OF THE QUEEN'S EMBROIDERERS.—The death is announced of Mrs. Anastasia Dolby, who was in early life embroidress to the Queen, and whose works on "Church Embroidery Ancient and Modern," and "Church Vestments: their Origin, Use, and Ornament," are books of standard authority. Mrs. Dolby, who was the wife of Mr. Edwin Dolby, the water-colour painter, died in her forty-eighth year.

THE HORSE SUPPLY.—The following are the members of the select committee of the House of Lords appointed "to inquire into the condition of this country with regard to horses, and its capabilities of supplying any present or future demand for them"—viz., the Duke of Cambridge, the Duke of Richmond, Lords Halifax, Lansdowne, Ailsbury, Portsmouth, Malmesbury, Lucan, Grey, Falmouth, Bessborough, Tyrone, Rodenale, Rosebery, Kesteven, and Blackford.

VALENTINE'S DAY AT NORWICH.—It appears that on St. Valentine's Eve, Norwich, about midnight, is awakened by a most welcome sound. "Every street, from the most fashionable to the most miserable, reverberated with repeated vigorous peals upon door-knockers, mighty thunderings at doors minus those conveniences, and violent and sustained pullings of house bells. The universality of the knocking and ringing, its vigorosity, and the confidence of its tone, indicated to a Norwichian that it was St. Valentine's Eve." It appears that it is customary for tradesmen and people who are not tradesmen to leave surreptitiously presents on the doorsteps of their customers and friends.

LIABILITIES OF PAWNBROKERS.—At the Haverham police-court the other day Mr. W. A. Chapman,

pawnbroker, of High Street, Kensington, was summoned by Mrs. Jane Livermore for delivering a coat which was of less value than at the time it was pledged. This case involved a question of considerable importance to the trade, as to whether a pawnbroker was liable for damage to an article which was moth-eaten while under his charge. Mr. Bridge said there was a difference of opinion as to the liabilities of pawnbrokers, but his reading of the law was that a pawnbroker was bound to take as much care of an article as the owner of it would do. He therefore decided against the defendant. He estimated the damage at 17s. 6d. Notice of appeal was given.

THE DUC DE CHARTRES.—The Duc de Chartres, brother to the Comte de Paris and grandson of Louis Philippe by the Crown Prince Duke of Orleans, who died by accident in 1842, has returned from his exploring expedition south of Algeria. He was accompanied by General Gallifet, of Communist siege memory. The caravan went as far as El-Goleah, a town in the desert about 120 leagues south of Biskra. The route was through a hitherto unknown country, and the gigantic caravan, of no less than 6,000 camels and other carrying beasts, wound its way along ridges or causeways formed by the sand. El-Goleah is the remotest point south of Algeria where Europeans ever penetrated. The duke and his companions were anxious to find the point of intersection with the route pursued by the caravans which cross the Sahara for reaching Timbuctoo; but whether they have succeeded or not up to now remains a Livingstone-Stanley mystery.

THE FEAST OF ST. PAUL.—At St. Paul's Cathedral a musical commemorative service was recently performed in honour of the festival of St. Paul. The building was closed to the public at one o'clock for the purpose of making preparation for the service, which it had been previously announced would commence at four. All the principal doors of the cathedral were thrown open to the public at three o'clock, and soon after the vast interior was quite crammed with people. The dome and nave were illuminated with gas. The general effect produced by the presence of the great multitude of persons and the grandeur of the service was of a very solemn and impressive character. The choir of the cathedral was augmented very materially, and a numerous and efficient instrumental accompaniment was in attendance, and joined with the organ in contributing to the general good effect of the music. A selection from Mendelssohn's "St. Paul" was given in place of the anthem of the evening. This selection was divided into three parts, and embraced its most characteristic features.

#### FACETIE.

A STAMP you cannot buy.—The stamp of a gentleman.

SOME men who are reported to "live on their wits," must live on very limited premises.

WHAT is the difference between a mischievous mouse and a beautiful young lady?—One has the cheese, the other charms the he.

"I SAY, don't you know who that is?" "No." "Why, it's the celebrated Jones." "What's he celebrated for, then?" "Well, I'm blest if I know."

MRS. PARTINGTON thinks that the grocers ought to hire a music teacher to teach them the notes correctly.

THE most striking difference between a foolish person and a looking-glass is that the one speaks without reflecting and the other reflects without speaking.

AS IT STRIKES US.—All railway passengers are familiar with the "beating" of the engine; does it arise from the governing rod? We wait of the other cause.—*Fun.*

GOLDEN LOOKS.—A young gentleman, speaking of a young beauty's fashionable yellowish hair, called it pure gold. "It ought to be," quoth K.—"it looks like twenty-four carats."

APPLE-LY WORDS.—A well known pomologist was heard to assert the other day, *apropos* of our first parents, that they would have been a happy pair if it had not been for the meddling.—*Fun.*

AN instance of throwing one's self about was witnessed a few evenings ago at a party in the case of a young lady who, when asked to sing, first tossed her head and then pitched her voice.

DON'T YOU SEE?—An ingenious youth presented himself at a fancy dress ball in ordinary evening costume, but describing himself as impersonating Ocean. On being asked how he represented Ocean he explained that he had "creaky" boots.—*Fun.*

AUTHOR (to Literary Friend in Bed): "Sick headache? Well, now, I've got the best cure in the world for you.—I'll read my two Five Act Tragedies."

They are both historical, and full of blood and thunder, and can't fail to do you good."

A PREVIOUS ACQUAINTANCE.—A rumour is current that a duelist on being recently introduced to a young lady, gracefully opened the conversation by saying, "Miss W—, I hope that I may consider that we are not entirely unacquainted. I had the pleasure of pulling out a tooth for your father a short time ago."

#### AN AGREEABLE PRACTICE.

Lady: "There is some one singing in a very disagreeable voice downstairs, Sarah; I wish you would stop it!"

Sarah: "Oh, mum, it's only Mary practising seconds."—*Fun.*

#### A MILITARY BALL.

"Did you ever go to a military ball?" asked a sleeping maid of an old veteran.

"No, my dear," growled the old soldier; "in those days I once had a military ball come to me. And what do you think it did? It took my leg off."

#### SOUND ADVICE.

"I say, Popsy, this chile has tried lots ob gift fares and things for a prize, but nebber could draw anything at all."

"Well, Cussar, I'd 'vise you to try a handcart; de chances are a thousand to one dat you could draw dat."

THE LOST WHETSTONE.—A barber while cutting the hair of a rural customer ran his shears against some hard substance which proved to be a whetstone. The old farmer said he had missed that whetstone ever since having time last July, and had looked all over the field for it, but now remembered sticking it up over his ear.

AN UNADVISED ORPHAN.—The great-grandfather of Thomas Edwards died at one hundred and fourteen, his grandfather at one hundred and four, but the father died at the early age of sixty-seven. His young son Edward, now only ninety-five, recklessly committed matrimony with a chit of seventy. This is what comes of being an unadvised orphan.

#### MODERN BELLES.

"I don't like modern belles, ma, because they are so much like burglars."

"Why, my son, what do you mean? How are modern belles like burglars?"

"Because, you see, they destroy the finest locks with powder."

#### PATRICK'S COAT.

"Good-morning, Patrick. You have got a new coat on at last, but it seems to fit you too much."

"Och! there's nothing surprising in that. Sure, I wasn't there when I was measured for it."

"How greedy you are," said one little girl to another, who had taken the best apple in the dish; "I was going to take that."

#### A MATTER OF TASTE.

(Never said, but thought of as we lit the cigar, to go home.)

"Do you like Browning?" asked a reading man of a young lady whom he had taken down to dinner. The fair creature by his side (who was no book-worm) answered, "Yes. That is, I like crackling."—*Punch.*

OPEN EARS.—A few days since a sassy person applied to a wealthy citizen for help, and received the small sum of sixpence. The giver remarked, as he handed him the pittance, "Take it, you are welcome; our ears are always open to the distressed." "That may be," replied the recipient; "but never before in my life have I seen so small an opening for such large ears."

A SUCCESSFUL RUSH.—A wag went to a station of one of the railroads one evening, and, finding the best carriage full, said, in a low tone, "Why, this carriage isn't going!" Of course this caused a general stampede, and the wag took the best seat in the midst of the indignation the wag was asked "Why did you say this carriage wasn't going?" "Well, it wasn't then," replied the wag, "but it is now."

#### INCIDENT OF AN ICE DAY.

Lady: "Going away tomorrow, Mr. Manners? Oh, but I cannot possibly do without you at my skating-party! You are the only disengaged man on my list!"

Mr. M.: "Exactly, my dear madam. The frost has been too much for so many fellows down here that I positively dare not stop any longer—might get captured myself, you know!"—*Punch.*

A REVEREND CLEBGYMAN.—An Irish clergyman, who was a hard labourer on his globe, and when so occupied dressed in a very ragged manner, was recently engaged attending the early potato field, when he was surprised by the rapid approach of his patron in an open carriage, with some ladies whom he was to meet at dinner in the afternoon. Unable to escape in time, he drew his hat over his



face, extended his arms covered with his tattered jacket, and passed himself off as a scarecrow.

A LOAFER'S LOGIC.

*Worthy Pastor:* "My boy, learn to be contented; mouths are never sent without the bread to feed them."

*Practical Boy:* "Oh, ah! but the mouths is sent to our house and the bread to yours!"—*Fun.*

REDISTRIBUTION.

*Shoeblack:* "Ere, young 'un, lend us yer broom an' yer can 'ave my blackin' brushes in exchange for the day!"

*Snow-sweeper:* "Oh, ar! nobody don't want their boots cleaned this weather, and they does want the snow sweep!"

*Shoeblack:* "G'long! cawl yerself a Republican and hobjek to an ockasional redistribution o' property!"—*Fun.*

MAKING MONEY.

"Is this good money?" said a man to a suspicious-looking wag, who had made some small purchase of him.

"It ought to be good, for I made it myself," was the answer.

Upon this the questioner proposed to give the man into custody for coining; but he explained, in his defence, that he made the money by fiddling.

ALAS! POOR CARP.

A famous French carp, dating from the time of Francis the First, aged three hundred and seventy-five years, and measuring three feet in length, and two and a half in breadth, was attacked the other day by an enormous pike and devoured. His poor fish bones, we may suppose, lie in Joush-like interment, and, were it possible to catch the devouring pike and label him with an epitaph, he should be made to carry this on his back:

*Requiescat in Pace.—Punch.*

"IT'S AN ILL WIND," ETC.

*Brown:* "Hullo, Jones! What's the matter?"  
*Jones (Amateur Tenor):* "Oh, dreadful chronic inflammation of the larynx! Lost my voice entirely!"

*Brown:* "Dear me! you don't mean that?"

*Jones:* "Yes—been obliged to give up singing altogether!"

*Brown (with alacrity):* "By George, look here, old fellow! Come and dine with us to-night, and spend the evening."—*Punch.*

ÆSTHETIC WITH A VENGEANCE.

*Tom:* "I say, old man, now you've got that shining horse of yours you ought to be looking out for a wife!"

*Rodolphus:* "Quite so. I was thinking of one of those Miss Gibsons, don't you know?"

*Tom:* "Ah! Let me recommend the tall one, old man. She'll make the best wife in the world!"

*Rodolphus:* "Quite so. But the short one seems to harmonize better with the kind of furniture I go in for—buhl and marqueterie, don't you know?"—*Punch.*

**BOOTS AND BEING.**—Among the various advertisements round about that besotify every practicable surface the wayfarer may have noticed one which offers him boots so constructed as to be capable of being continually renovated by having affixed to them, when necessary, a new heel. This is an ingenious contrivance for prolonging a boot's existence, but, alas! it will make no boot last for ever. Besides that, the upper leathers must still wear out, and the renewal of the heel of a boot can boot but little when we cannot depend on the immortality of the sole.—*Punch.*

FRAGMENT OF FASHIONABLE CONVERSATION.

(After the door is closed.)

*Little Swell No. 1:* "Huntin' to-day?"  
*Little Swell No. 2 (settling himself in the up-train, attended by Livery Stable Keeper):* "Er—yass."  
*No. 1:* "Keep your horses here?"  
*No. 2:* "Er—yass."  
*No. 1:* "Was that Smashem?"  
*No. 2:* "Er—yass."  
*No. 1:* "Useful fellow, eh?"  
*No. 2:* "Er—yass. Lend me twenty pounds once—never paid him!"—*Punch.*

THE LOVE OF LAW.

There was rather a novel action brought lately in the Bradford County Court by a wool-sorter who wished to recover the cost of a watch and chain from a damsel whom he had been courting for some years and to whom, though he "had not actually promised marriage, he had spoken about it on certain occasions." The defendant stated that the watch was hers because

The plaintiff had given it to her in love, and what was given in love could not be taken back in law. Although in this particular instance love's gift was confirmed by law, we fear the young woman's acquaintance with the latter was not so intimate as with the former. A few hours spent in the Divorce Court would prove to her that law can hardly keep

up with its duties in the way of taking back what was given in love.—*Fun.*

THE REASON WHY.

*Attorney:* "I beg to disagree with your honour. I was born and reared in a parsonage, which was next to the village church, and the happiest days of my life were spent in that dwelling next to the church."

*Justice:* "There is much truth in your remark, no doubt, sir; but if you lived near a church now in your maturity, as I do now, I think you would experience some unpleasant and annoying incidents occasionally. I assure you I find it very disagreeable at times."

*Attorney:* "I have no doubt you do, your honour; but that is easily explained, I imagine, as your honour resides next to an Episcopalian church, and you are yourself a strict Presbyterian!"

DEATH INSURANCE.  
A FABLE.

A MOUNTBANK whose life displayed  
Uncommon genius in the trade  
Of getting much while giving naught  
(Except a deal of knavish thought)  
Gave out through all the country round  
That he the magic art had found  
Of teaching Eloquence to all

Who chose to pay (the fee was small)!

Indeed, the rogue declared, his plan  
Would educate the dullest man—

Nay, e'en a horse, or ox, or ass,  
Till he in speaking would surpass  
Immortal Tully! and would show  
All modern arts that lawyers know,

Besides, to grace a brilliant speech!

"All this I undertake to teach  
The merest dunce—or else," he said,  
"The forfeiture shall be my head!"

Of course so marvellous a thing  
Soon through the courtiers reached the king,

Who, having called the charlatan  
Into his presence, thus began

"Well, Sir Professor, I have heard  
Your boasts—and take you at your word.

Between us be it now agreed  
That to my stable you proceed

At once, and thence a donkey take  
Of whom—'tis bargained—you shall make  
An orator of fluent speech;

Or, failing thus the brute to teach,  
You shall be hanged till you are dead!"

"A bargain, sire!" the fellow said;  
"And ten years' time shall be allowed;  
It is but fair." The monarch bowed,  
And now my fee be pleased to pay!"

Then takes the gold and goes away.  
A courtier whom he chanced to meet,  
A fortnight later, in the street  
Began the fellow to deride  
About his bargain. "Faith!" he cried,  
"A fine agreement you have made!  
I mean to see the forfeit paid;  
The art of rhetoric to teach—  
Of course you'll make a gallows speech!"

"Laugh as you may, my merry man!"  
Replied the cunning charlatan;  
"Although my wisdom you may flout,  
I know, quite well, what I'm about.

If in the years allotted, I,  
The king, or ass, should chance to die,  
Pray, don't you see, my giddy friend,  
The bargain finds a speedy end?

My fee was but a premium paid  
To one in the insurance trade;  
Of one or other of the three  
Ten years are pretty sure to see

The epitaph—as chances fall—  
I take the hazard—that is all!"

J. G. S.

GEMS.

If young and old persons would spend half the money in making others happy which they spend in dress and useless luxury how much more real pleasure it would give them.

**TRUE LIFE.**—The mere lapse of years is not life. To eat, drink and sleep—to be exposed to darkness and light—to pace round in the mill of habit, and turn thought into an implement of trade—this is not life. Knowledge, truth, love, beauty, goodness, faith, alone can give vitality to the mechanism of existence.

"How little notice is taken of you in the world?" said a pin to a needle. "You are always about your work, slipping in and out so softly, but never stopping to be praised. When a pretty dress is finished who thinks of the needle that sewed it? Even the holes that you make are so small that they close up directly behind you." "I'm content to be

useful," said the needle. "I do not ask to be praised. I do not remain in my work, it is true; but I leave behind me a thread which shows that my course has not been in vain." So let us pass through life, doing our duty as we go, remembered for some good work left behind when we ourselves have departed.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**CUP CAKE.**—Two eggs, one cup of sugar, one half-cup butter, one half-cup cream, one half-cup sour milk, flour, soda and cinnamon.

To prevent ink from turning mouldy it has been recommended by a German chemist to add a drop or two of mustard oil. A similar addition to starch paste is said to prevent its becoming sour.

**TRIOY PUDDING.**—One cup of chopped suet, one teaspoonful each of salt and soda, one scant cup of molasses, one and a half of milk, two teaspoonfuls of cream tartar, two and a half cups of flour, and one cup of chopped raisins. Add spices if you like, and boil three hours.

**LOVE'S ROLL.**—Put two quarts of flour in a pan; rub in a piece of butter; make a hole in the flour, in which put a spoonful or more sugar; one half-cup new yeast, one pint new milk; brush the flour over it lightly and let it stand over night; in the morning add half a teaspoonful soda; knead thoroughly and put in the pan again; rise an hour or two, then make into rolls, and rise again; bake about twenty minutes.

STATISTICS.

**PORT OF FALMOUTH.**—The following is a list of the number, tonnage, and flags of the vessels, principally for orders, and exclusive of all coasters, which arrived at Falmouth during the year 1872: English 1,899, 865,933 register tonnage; German 542, 158,932; Italian 352, 150,738; Norwegian 218, 80,180; Austrian 181, 77,704; Russian 89, 45,958; French 100, 33,787; Dutch 112, 31,371; Danish 125, 25,391; Swedish 101, 33,751; American 65, 62,994; Spanish 92, 28,117; Greek 54, 16,946; Portuguese 11, 2,106; Turkish 4, 1,439—grand total 3,945 vessels, 1,618,257 tons. The above list compared with that of 1871 shows an excess in ships of 267, and in tonnage of 176,787. The Trinity pilotage for twelve months ending the 30th of September amounted to 15,036*l.* 19*s.* 8*d.*, being above that of every other port in the United Kingdom, with the sole exception of London.

MISCELLANEOUS.

**MRS. ELIZABETH DAWES**, a widow, of Carharzack, Cornwall, died in February, at the reputed age of 102.

One of the chief amusements of the Roman Carnival this year has been to throw about live birds sewn to oranges and flowers.

THREE new halls have been opened in the Louvre for the exhibition of pictures by Rubens, Van Dyck, Snyders, and of small paintings of the Dutch school, which have not found places in the Grande Galerie.

THE great novelty for early spring will be the Ohudde costume, made in Italian cashmere, and ornamented with real Oriental embroidery, in two shades.

REPLYING to the Mayor of Manchester, the Queen has consented to become a patron of the International Fruit, Flower, and Vegetable Show, which is to be held in Manchester in September next.

THE Duc d'Anjals is going to remove his collection of pictures from Twickenham to Chantilly. This collection, which consists of more than 3,500 paintings of different schools and periods, will be placed in the gallery of the Jeu de Paume.

THE auditor appointed by the Treasury to examine the accounts of the Metropolitan Board of Works has disallowed about 3,500*l.* expended in the erection of seats for the accommodation of the vestries on Thanksgiving Day, February 27, 1872.

PARTS possesses a prodigy of a star-gazer, gifted with the most wonderful long sight. Not only can M. Jean Marie Trubel distinguish the stars in broad daylight, but he can see Jupiter's four moons and Saturn's rings with the naked eye.

SOME statistics from the old home of the green cloth:—56,613 people visited Baden in 1868; 62,036 in 1869, 28,810 in 1870, 50,190 in 1871, and 58,110 in 1872. What will be the number this year, now that the all-fascinating gaming tables are gone?

THE last tax across the Channel is an *impôt des marrons*, the Parisian authorities having determined to impose a duty on chestnuts imported into the capital. As Paris consumes less than 10,000,000 chestnuts yearly, it is reckoned that this tax will produce the modest sum of 28,800*l.*

## CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
FICKLE FORTUNE ...	451	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ...	503
THE MYSTERY OF ...	452	STATISTICS ...	503
FALKLAND TOWNS ...	485	MISCELLANEOUS ...	503
THE YOUNG LOCKSMITH ...	483		No.
RED HELM ...	489	THE FORTUNES OF ...	
THE FOOT TICKLER ...	493	BRAMBLETHORPE ...	508
HALF-PENNY POSTAGE ...	495	commenced in ...	508
THE FORTUNES OF ...		RED HELM, commenced ...	507
BRAMBLETHORPE ...	496	THE FOOT TICKLER, commenced ...	508
LADY CHETWIND'S ...	498	LADY CHETWIND'S ...	508
SPECTRE ...	498	SPECTRE, commenced ...	508
SCIENCE ...	499	THE YOUNG LOCKSMITH, commenced in ...	511
BRICK KILNS ...	499	THE MYSTERY OF ...	
PHOTOGRAPH ...	499	FALKLAND TOWNS, commenced in ...	513
TRAITS—AN IM- ...	499	FICKLE FORTUNE, commenced in ...	514
PROVINCIAL ...	499		
STREAM AS A FIRE EX- ...	499		
THE BLACK BROOD ...	500		
FACTILE ...	502		
GEMS ...	503		

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. D. COPE.—We have no more exact account than the one you mention.

M. T. AND E. S.—Advertise in the form usual in our columns—as you will see on this very page.

RICHARD S.—The sentiment is good, and in every way creditable to you, but the poetry at present hardly attains our standard. Thanks for your communication.

JESSIE LEIGH.—Apply at the Royal Free Hospital, Gray's Inn Road, where you will get the best advice, without any further trouble or inquiry.

HARRY.—The Fire of London originated in Nov., 1666, in the time of Charles the Second. The Great Plague occurred in the previous year (1665), when 68,596 persons are said to have perished.

GILBERT G. M.—Hardly suited for our columns, but decidedly good for a first attempt. The beats of the versification are not quite regular, but all that will improve by practice. Read our good poets and plume your own wings as you may be able.

E. S.—Unfortunately there is no lack, but indeed the reverse, of poets and song writers. Your best course, we presume, would be to take counsel with some music publishers, of whom you will find several in Regent Street, Bond Street, and Oxford Street. But we ought honestly to tell you there are many difficulties in the way.

YOUNG LOCKSMITH.—We are unacquainted with the trials you mention, at any rate they are not being printed now. But various trials (recent ones) are being published as a sort of modern Newgate Calendar, and these might be heard of or ordered on application to any good news-vendor.

JAMES CLARKE.—Constantly from Liverpool. Your shortest course would be to purchase a Liverpool newspaper and then think you would soon be in a way to acquire the information. Consult its advertising columns. Of course there are various agents, but you will learn all if you do as we suggest.

R. S. S.—To make blacking, take of Ivory-black and treacle each 12 oz., spermaceti oil 4 oz., white wine vinegar 4 pints; mix. This blacking is superior in giving leather a finer polish than any of those that are advertised, as they all contain sulphuric acid (oil of vitriol), which is necessary to give the polishing quality, but which renders the leather rotten and very liable to crack.

A. M.—We have never tried the formula in question, nor any other formula of the kind, though there is, of course, no telling what we may all have to do ultimately. However, as the one you refer to is extensively advertised and extensively patronised, and as, moreover, the ingredients for such a receipt are tolerably innocent, we rather think that you might do well by using it. It can, we think, do no harm, and most probably it will justify the most sanguine expectations.

H. A. M. (St. Leonard's-on-Sea).—We could not honestly advise you to put any faith in the extraordinary invention. If you have attained manhood it is certain the thing cannot be done; consequently the pretension is unworthy of the notice of a sensible person. Be content, therefore, with your present height, and take life as it is. Some men consider themselves too short, others too tall, but were their wishes to be gratified it is probable that they would be again disappointed the next day.

ANNIE CORNISH.—Sunday, Oct. 1, 1864, great calamity at Erieh occasioned by the explosion of about 1,000 barrels of gunpowder, containing 100 lbs. each. The buildings of the Messrs. Hall were blown to dust, and the embankment in front thrown with great violence into the Thames. The explosion was heard and felt at Charing Cross, a distance of fifteen miles. Five men were known to have been killed on the spot, five others were missing, presumably killed, and three died after removal to Guy's Hospital, and those seriously injured amounted to twelve. The coroner's jury returned a verdict of Accidental Death.

EVA F. MILNER.—1. It depends altogether upon whether the dignity is that of a knight simply or of a baronet. If a knight the son cannot take the title, it is only conferred for life. But the son of a baronet inherits the paternal title. 2. Sir is not in any way necessarily connected with the army; such titles are conferred by the crown, as are all other titles upon persons supposed to be deserving of the honours. We ought to add that the mere prefix Sir applies alike to knights and baronets. Also the title of knight has now become very common indeed. There is little social dignity implied in the title. See any peerage—Burke, Debrett, &c.—in the Table of Precedence.

ANAK.—Rhodes is a celebrated island of the Archi-

pelago at the entrance of the Gulf of Makri about 45 miles long by 18 in its broadest part. The climate is delightful, and every pleasant fruit and fragrant flower abounds there. The Saracens became possessors of it in 965, and in 1309 it was taken from them by the Knights of St. John. They retained it till 1525, when it was taken by the Turks, after an obstinate resistance, and the small number of knights that remained were afterwards removed to Malta. On a part of the harbour stood the famous Rhodian Colossus, under which vessels might travel—it was seventy cubits high, and was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world. The Colossus was thrown down by an earthquake fifty-six years after its erection.

LUCK.—We thank you for your verses, although we have to regret our inability to use them. Regarded as a poem, or indeed as a composition, what you have sent is seriously defective. We will take the first verse only to illustrate our meaning. The depths of the sandy deeps is unduly pleonastic, and is indeed wholly inadmissible. Rests all the souls is simply bad grammar; a plural noun, you know, takes its accompanying verb in the plural number—rest therefore being the correct form. Your ear—a pretty one, no doubt—will tell you that deep and Northfeet are words that do not rhyme. Indeed throughout several rhymes are manifestly wrong; e.g., faith will not rhyme with safe, nor pass with fast. But we see that you have taken pains with your poem, and so we recommend you to try again.

CORA SETHMOUR.—1. We took the receipts being highly recommended in an excellent collection. For ourselves we should prefer to leave all such interferences with nature alone, for whatever success may be immediately gained, nature usually suffers. That exquisite golden hair with the slightly red or brown tinge which ladies now long for and also dye for is—to give one instance—a somewhat dangerous thing to imitate. Several ladies, once possessors of glorious hair, have, after using the fashionable dye, found their hair all falling off. We don't say that such is always the case, and we admire greatly the exquisite colour in question, but still we know it to be often the case. 2. The preparation we mentioned would not keep. It would require to be made anew.

"IT WASN'T SO WHEN I WAS YOUNG."

Dame Myrtle looked adown the road,  
Where, hand in hand, two lovers strayed,  
And to the prying villagers  
The secret of each heart betrayed.  
The look of love was in their eyes,  
And love was in the songs they sang;  
"Ah, me!" the good dame said, and sighed,  
"It wasn't so when I was young!"

"For maids were coy, and men gallant,  
And urged their suit on bended knee.  
Those were the days of modest love—  
Those were the days of chivalry!  
But now a lover's looks and ways  
Are themes for every idle tongue,  
And hearts are not the precious things  
They used to be when I was young!"

"Why in my time," and here she paused  
To set her cap and smooth her hair,  
"We thought 'twas part of Love's behest  
To keep a lover in despair.  
But now the maid is lightly wooed,  
And lightly won I must confess;  
Too willing lips can never yield  
The bliss of that reluctant Yes!"

Dame Myrtle took her glasses down,  
And wiped them very clean and dry,  
While, hand in hand, before her cot,  
The happy lovers sauntered by.  
She seemed to hear their whispered words,  
She seemed to know the songs they sung.  
Good dame, confess that you forget—  
'Twas just the same when you were young!

J. P.

HOWARD, nineteen, tall, loving, a thorough gentleman, in a good social position, and good tempered.

CHARLES T., twenty, a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must also be about twenty, and fond of music.

WILLIAM T., a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be about eighteen or nineteen, fair complexion, like himself, and fond of home and children.

W. T. C., a bandman in the Royal Navy, dark complexion, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be about twenty, able to cook, and domesticated.

W. H. W., a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be about twenty, of a loving disposition, and fond of home and children; a cook preferred.

A HARRY OKE, twenty, medium height, fair, good looking, in a good position, and musical. Respondent must be a pretty blonde in the like circumstances.

PATRY T., twenty-two, medium height, dark hair, and fair complexion. Respondent must be tall, dark, and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

VICTOR D., twenty-four, tall, dark, affectionate, handsome, and fond of home. Respondent must be about twenty-two, tall, dark, pretty, and domesticated.

WINIFRED, medium height, good figure, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be about twenty-seven, loving, and fond of home.

EDWIN, twenty-three, tall, fair, hazel eyes, dark-brown hair, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen, pretty, loving, and domesticated.

JULIA C., dark eyes, light-brown hair, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty, dark, and fond of home.

NANCY V., nineteen, tall, dark, blue eyes, and considered good looking, would like to correspond with a respectable mechanic.

HAPPY JACK, twenty-one, 5ft. 10in., fair complexion, fair hair, and blue eyes. Respondent must be tall, fair, domesticated, and have a little money.

LOVELY HARRIET, twenty-five, gray eyes, and brown hair, wishes to correspond with a tall, dark young man about twenty-five or twenty-six; a mechanic preferred.

ELGIVA, twenty-one, dark-brown hair, black eyes, fair complexion, loving, and domesticated. Respondent

must be tall, dark, about twenty-four, and in a good position.

J. W. H., twenty-one, fair complexion, blue eyes, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be about nineteen, dark complexion, and fond of home.

HARRY FLO, thirty, medium height, blue eyes, and dark hair, would make a loving and affectionate wife to a steady tradesman; must be dark, and thirty.

MURRAY ROSE, twenty-three, medium height, dark eyes, brown hair, of a loving disposition, and true, would make a careful wife to a mechanic; must be about twenty-five.

GENTLE LILY, nineteen, medium height, brown eyes, dark hair, of a loving and tender nature. Respondent must be about twenty-two, dark, good looking, and capable of making a good home.

LIVELY HARRY, twenty-three, dark, curly hair, blue eyes, considered good looking, and an actor by profession. Respondent must have a little money or property, and be fond of the stage.

CUTTAS JIN, twenty-five, 5ft. 4in., dark complexion, and a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be from eighteen to twenty-two, pretty, respectable, and thoroughly domesticated.

ETHEL T., eighteen, tall, dark complexion, affectionate, and very fond of music. Respondent must be twenty-three, rather tall, loving, and fond of home and children.

JOHN JAMES H., twenty, a seaman in the Royal Navy, fair complexion, blue eyes, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be about nineteen or twenty, fond of home and children.

JENNY, twenty-one, tall, rather stout, dark hair, gray eyes, good tempered, domesticated, fond of home, and a servant. Respondent must be tall, fair, loving, fond of home, and temperate.

JESSIE, twenty-two, brown hair and eyes, rather tall, domesticated, and of a loving disposition, considered pretty. Respondent must be about twenty-five, fair complexion, loving, and fond of home.

MARIA J., twenty-two, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, considered handsome, of a very loving disposition and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, fair, loving, and fond of home and children.

ANNIE, twenty-three, medium height, fair complexion, light-brown hair, brown eyes, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be about twenty-five or twenty-six, tall, dark, and good tempered; a respectable mechanic preferred.

MARGARET, twenty-four, tall, rather inclined to be stout, blue eyes, brown hair, of a cheerful disposition, and in a good position. Respondent must be from thirty to forty, kind, good tempered, and the mate of a merchant ship.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ALFRED is responded to by—"Marjorie N.," good looking, domesticated, and musically inclined.

TOM E. by—"Ombrin," nineteen, loving, domesticated, and is a good musician.

LILY D. by—"J. W. B.," twenty-four, medium height, fair, and in a comfortable position.

FLYING JIB by—"Lizzie," tall, fair, handsome, and would make a fond and loving wife.

ALFRED by—"Theodora B.," pretty, able to keep a home comfortable.

COLONIAS by—"Kathleen V.," fair, musical, and domesticated.

MAX J. by—"Ernest C.," is dark, and of medium height.

T. T. by—"M. A. T.," nineteen, 5ft. 2in., blue eyes, domesticated, and would make a loving wife.

MAGGIE by—"Charlie," twenty-seven, fair, loving, and fond of home.

ADA and FLORA by—"Silex," twenty-five, clerk, in a good situation, and handsome.

BELLA by—"George B.," twenty-four, tall, fair hair, blue eyes, and considered handsome, and fond of home and children.

GIPSY Q. by—"Stephen H.," twenty-one, dark complexion, tall, considered handsome, and a seaman in the Royal Navy.

MINNIE M. by—"William E.," tall, dark complexion, black hair and eyes, and possesses all the requirements mentioned.

JACK MAINSAIL by—"Jessie A.," twenty-four, medium height, dark complexion, good tempered, fond of home, and thinks she would suit him in every respect.

JOSEPH F. by—"Sarah F.," twenty-five, medium height, good tempered, domesticated, affectionate, and fond of children.

AUBREY by—"Nellie," eighteen, pretty, blue eyes, golden hair, domesticated, would make a good little wife, and well educated.

JAMES Z. S. by—"Loving Nellie," twenty-six, medium height, considered pretty, hazel eyes, brown hair, and domesticated.

BETSY by—"John W.," twenty-three, tall, dark complexion, blue eyes, respectfully connected, loving, good tempered, and a tradesman.

EVERYBODY'S JOURNAL, Parts 1 to 4, Price Threepence each.

THE LONDON READER, Post-free Three-halfpence Weekly; or Quarterly One Shilling and Eightpence.

\*. Now Ready, VOL. XIX. OF THE LONDON READER, Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE AND INDEX to VOL. XIX. Price ONE PENNY.

NOTICE.—Part 118, for MARCH, Now Ready, price 6d.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by G. A. SMITH.